

HIV-positive asylum-seekers win benefits victory

High Court case opens way for 200 refugees to claim backdated allowance, reports Richard Ford

TWO HUNDRED asylum-seekers are to have their disability living allowance restored after a High Court victory yesterday for two Ugandans with HIV.

The Government conceded in court that decisions taken during the former Conservative government to stop paying the allowance could not stand. Mr Justice Sedley quashed the decisions against the two Ugandans.

One of the two successful applicants yesterday was a girl aged 8, referred to in court as "K", whose mother is also

HIV positive. The girl's elder brother died of an AIDS-related condition.

She and her family will receive an estimated £3,300 in allowances, backdated to the middle of February when new curbs on social security benefits for asylum-seekers were introduced by the Tories. The girl arrived with her mother and brother in 1992 and was awarded the disability allowance 12 months later.

The other applicant, re-

ferred to as "O", claimed asylum in 1994 and was awarded disability allowance in February 1995 but lost it earlier this year. He was said to be suffering from HIV symptoms and to have disabling wounds sustained in a grenade explosion in Uganda. Other injuries had been inflicted when he was tortured, the man said.

He is appealing against the decision to refuse asylum but the case is unlikely to be heard

before the end of next year. Under the regulations introduced in February, asylum-seekers are not entitled to benefits if they apply for refugee status after entering the UK or are appealing against a decision to refuse asylum.

The Child Poverty Action Group, which with the Immunity Legal Centre supported K and O in their court action, said that those receiving benefits before the new rules were

introduced had been promised protection, but ministers had reneged on the promise.

Many disabled or terminally ill asylum-seekers had been left penniless and had to seek charity help, Carolyn George, of the action group, said. "Anyone whose benefits was cut off in similar circumstances should now ask for their benefit to be reinstated," she said.

Government officials argued that in individual cases

all such DSS awards were subject to review because the law had changed, even though ministers had promised existing claimants protection from the changes.

Mr Justice Sedley agreed, with the Government's consent, to quash the decisions against K and O. He also granted them a declaration that the 1996 Social Security (Persons from Abroad) Miscellaneous Amendment Regulations did not amount to a

change in circumstances which allowed disability living allowance to be removed from those claiming it before February 5, 1996.

The Department of Social Security said that about 200 other asylum-seekers would have disability allowance restored. A spokesman said: "We have conceded the issues at stake in these two individual cases. That does not threaten our underlying policy intention that only genuine asylum-seekers who claim at the port of entry should have access to benefits."

Field 'not breaking pledge' on pensions

Frank Field, the Social Security Minister, defended the Government yesterday against accusations that it had broken a pre-election pledge to war pensioners. The Royal British Legion says that Labour promised two years ago to review the arrangement that allows local authorities to take into account a person's war pension when they assess eligibility for means-tested benefits.

The Department of Social Security says now that there are no plans for such a review. Mr Field said there had been no U-turn, and that it was up to local authorities to change their policies. Labour said for two years it would stick to the spending limits it inherited.

Trawler cheats

The owners of a Spanish-crewed trawler were fined £22,500 and forfeited an excess catch worth £12,450, for catching more than four times her quota of the monkfish 220 miles southwest of Land's End. The *Pembroke* is owned by Bellbeat, of Truro, but based in northern Spain.

TB from abroad

Immigrants from Africa account for a high proportion of tuberculosis cases in Britain, according to the Public Health Laboratory Service. Half the 6,000 cases of TB detected every year occur in people born abroad, either in Africa or Asia. HIV infection is linked to the rise in TB.

Priest given visa

One of six Roman Catholic priests refused entry to Britain to provide holiday relief cover in Shrewsbury and Westminster dioceses was understood to be on his way here after being granted a visa by the British Embassy in Brussels. The move came after an intervention by John Prescott.

Abuse inquiry

A child sex abuse investigation involving hundreds of former inmates of local authority homes over 20 years has been launched by Northumbria Police. Two men working in homes were suspended in June after a former resident of a Newcastle home talked to a social worker.

Mother sues

A mother is to sue Aberdeen and Edinburgh Royal Infirmarys over her daughter, who died of liver failure after experimenting with Ecstasy. Carolann Paul, originally claimed that Michelle, 15, was refused a transplant on moral grounds, but this was rejected by a fatal accident inquiry.

Just dessert

The comedian Vic Reeves has been questioned by police about an alleged attack on a photographer with rice pudding. Kent Police questioned him after an allegation by Stephen Petters that he needed eight stitches after a confrontation with Mr Reeves at his home in Ashford, Kent.

Inconvenient call

A public lavatory and a drinks machine were among those named by BT as making nuisance calls last year. While the number of malicious calls from people is declining, there were more complaints about faulty machines trying to report malfunctions to the wrong number.

Mowlam hails TV debate as a sign of Ulster progress

BY MARTIN FLETCHER
CHIEF IRELAND
CORRESPONDENT

THE Government yesterday hailed the heated televised debate between Unionist and Sinn Féin leaders on Tuesday night as a sign that the Ulster Unionist Party would attend next month's peace negotiations.

Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, said she hoped Ken Maginnis's decision to debate with Martin McGuinness of Sinn Féin on *Newsnight* was "an indicator that by September 15 we will be in inclusive talks with all the parties around the table".

Gerry Adams, the Sinn Féin president, said that the real significance of the live debate — the two parties' first on British television — was that it had taken place at all. He urged Unionists "not to be in the corridor or another room but to be as Ken Maginnis was last night with Martin McGuinness, across the table arguing their point of view".

But Mr Maginnis said yesterday that the debate would make it harder for Dr Mowlam to invite Sinn Féin to the talks, because he had exposed it as a party still wedded to guns to achieve its ends.

"As far as sitting down with the IRA... I don't see that coming about," the Fermanagh MP said. "I simply can't see any beginning, any opening, in terms of the attitude of the IRA and hence it would be

The atmosphere behind the scenes at Tuesday night's debate was even frostier than on camera. Ken Maginnis not only refused Martin McGuinness's public invitation to join him in a side room "to discuss your fears and mine", the Unionist MP would not even exchange smalltalk with his Sinn Féin counterpart. The two foes did not greet each other when they arrived. For ten minutes before the debate began they sat side by side saying nothing. Neither was there any handshake when the debate ended.

a futile exercise." Mr Maginnis used the debate to label Mr McGuinness the IRA's "godfather of godfathers", blame him directly for hundreds of IRA killings, and to open a new front against Sinn Féin. He repeatedly pressed Mr McGuinness to accept the principle of consent whereby any change in Northern Ireland's status would require majority support among Ulster's people.

Mr McGuinness countered that no one had asked for the nationalists' consent before locking them into "a sectarian and bigoted state in the North". He insisted that "we need the consent of everybody" for any new settlement — meaning all the people of Ireland.

"If we can't get past the first

hurdle then what's the point in pretending that you can redeem the men of violence, that the IRA can... become a democratically acceptable organisation?", asked Mr Maginnis.

Ian Paisley, leader of the rival Democratic Unionist Party, said that if Mr Maginnis really believed that Mr McGuinness was the IRA's "godfather of godfathers" he should not even think of negotiating with him.

Who "won" the debate was a matter of opinion. Mr Maginnis clearly riled Mr McGuinness by raising his terrorist connections, but Mr McGuinness scored points by arguing for an end to all recriminations. "All of us have suffered, and all of us have inflicted suffering," he said.

The Irish Government meanwhile provoked more Unionist anger yesterday by resuming its practice of releasing IRA prisoners early in response to the new ceasefire.

Gerald Burke, who was serving four years for robbery at Portlaoise high-security prison, and Thomas Flynn, serving six months for assault, were the first IRA prisoners freed since the last ceasefire ended with the Canary Wharf bomb in February 1996. Dr Mowlam suggested the British Government might follow suit later if the ceasefire holds.

At the Maze prison, south of Belfast 20 dozen members of the Loyalist Volunteer Force went on the rampage to protest at their conditions.



Fringe attraction: the Guards regiments adopted the bearskin after Waterloo

Guards prepare to defend hairy honour of regiment

BY LIN JENKINS

GUARDS regiments mounted a rear-guard action yesterday in defence of the traditional bearskin.

While the Army has been asked by the Government to look again into the possibility of suitable synthetic alternatives, it maintains that no substitute has yet been found that compares.

Lord Gilbert, defence minister with animal-lover credentials, believes it should not be beyond the skills of modern science to produce an adequate substitute. Bearskins come from the Canadian black bear, which,

according to the Army, has to be culled to ensure its survival.

Guards regiments insist that fakes have led only to sartorial disaster during ceremonial duties with "fur" becoming either matted and flat or frizzy and bouffant.

General Sir Willie Ross, Colonel of the Coldstream Guards, said: "I am not sure exactly what the problem is. The bearskin is available and the animals are not endangered, indeed they are culled. The bearskin is genuine and it is traditional. It also lasts a very, very long time. I wear one I got through my family. One officer I know has one

that is at least 100 years old." But General Ross stressed that the Guards was always "open to suggestions".

The Ministry of Defence said that Lord Gilbert, whose wife Jean is a member of the fund-raising committee of the World Wildlife Fund for Nature, was well known for his interest in animal welfare and had asked for an explanation of the "rationale" behind the bearskin.

The bearskin is worn as a battle honour, having been adopted after the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo in 1815. His imperial guard had worn skins and the victorious regiments took them up.

McMaster family talk to inquiry

BY DOMINIC KENNEDY AND GILLIAN BOWDITCH

THE elderly parents of the MP Gordon McMaster have given evidence to the Labour Party inquiry into his suicide.

William and Alison McMaster met the Chief Whip, Nick Brown, to discuss the contents of their son's suicide note, which spoke of a smear campaign and named the MP Tommy Graham and the Labour peer Lord Dixon. The two men have denied smearing Mr McMaster, who was MP for Paisley South.

Today his closest political ally, Irene Adams, MP for Paisley North, will collect affidavits from local politicians. A firm of Paisley solicitors will be at her constituency centre office this afternoon to witness the oaths.

She is expected to hand over more than 20 affidavits to the inquiry in the next few

days. Some local politicians have chosen to swear their affidavits in the secrecy of their own homes, in the presence of Justices of the Peace.

Mrs Adams is determined that the death of her close friend will force the National Labour Party to rid Paisley of a minority which, she and her allies say, has caused a poisonous atmosphere.

Mr Brown is believed to be speaking mainly to MPs. In addition to Mrs Adams and Mr Graham, Mr Brown has taken evidence from Norman Godman, MP for Greenock and Inverclyde, who also claims he was smeared. The Chief Whip is also talking to senior officers of the Scottish Labour Party, which has conducted two previous inquiries into local party politics in Paisley.

Tourists warned to avoid flashpoints

BY GLEN OWEN

BRITISH tourists planning to visit Israel were last night warned by the Foreign Office to be extremely careful and avoid the occupied areas.

More than 216,000 Britons go to Israel each year, many of them young people drawn by the romantic image of life on one of the country's 250 kibbutzim. The network of co-operative settlements, developed at the start of the century by socialist Zionists, exerts a strong pull on foreign volunteers.

The original vision of a kibbutz, with work and property shared out equally for the good of the community, reached its peak in the 1960s. More recently, the settlements have become popular with young people eager to travel before they start work or university.

Many backpack around the country: the two Britons shot yesterday were hitchhiking from

the beach resort of Eilat to the settlement of Mitzpe Ramon. The Foreign Office said last night that while both areas were fairly safe, travellers exposed themselves to unnecessary risk on journeys by accepting lifts from strangers.

"We are advising people going to Israel to be extremely careful, avoiding the occupied

areas, taking their passport with them at all times and, where possible, travelling by taxi or their own private car," a spokesman said.

"This shooting seems to have been a straightforward criminal act, which could have happened almost anywhere. They are just as likely to occur in Los Angeles or Florida, and

we do not say that British tourists should not go there — we just urge them to take sensible precautions when they arrive."

The Israeli Embassy in London said that apart from a couple of carefully-monitored flashpoint areas, the country was a safe holiday destination. A spokeswoman said: "Entry

to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is being very tightly controlled, and visitors are very strongly discouraged from trying to go there. Elsewhere, normal rules apply. This shooting was clearly an isolated incident, and in no way related to the political situation."

"The stupidity of hitch-hiking is something that concerns many governments. It was a silly thing for these two to have done, entering a stranger's car in the Negev desert in the middle of the night, and supports the argument for making hitch-hiking illegal, as some countries have done. In the meantime, we urge travellers to take care when accepting lifts."

Ten British teenagers were injured last month in Jaffa, after an Arab-Israeli man drove his car into their school group. The Israeli authorities do not believe they were targeted because of their nationality.

Briton shot dead in Israel

Continued from page 1
great future ahead of him. The holiday was an opportunity for him to go away and think about what he wanted to do. The man must have been a terrorist or something. There was no reason to choose two students because they would have had no money."

He added: "Max was loved by everyone and the only thing we can hope is that Charlotte will be all right and they catch the man who did this. She is a

lovely girl, beautiful and charming and she had Max under control."

Mr Hunter was due to be best man at his sister Vanessa's wedding later this year. His body is due to be flown home today.

Last night David Gibb, a chartered surveyor, and his wife Jennifer, were driven by police to Heathrow for a flight to Israel to be reunited with their daughter.

In a statement issued on

their behalf, Chief Inspector David Goodwin said: "Charlotte rang her home on Sunday to confirm she was well and was moving to Eilat... her parents have spoken to the hospital. Staff have described her as being treble lucky."

The Foreign Office said it remained uncertain whether it was a terrorist or criminal attack.

It was the second attack on British tourists in the country this summer.

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DELL

Princess jumps queue for the crystal ball

Emma Wilkins traces events that led Diana and Dodi Fayed to fly north for a glimpse into their future

DIANA, Princess of Wales, introduced Dodi Fayed, her new companion, to her favourite clairvoyant after jumping an 18-month waiting list for appointments.

Rita Rogers, a former gypsy who lives near Chesterfield in Derbyshire, is booked up until early 1999 for consultations at £80 an hour.

The self-styled "priestess" of spiritualism felt able to make an exception for the Princess, who arrived at Mrs Rogers's house in a Harrods helicopter with Mr Fayed late on Tuesday afternoon.

Mrs Rogers, 51, who claims to have inherited her gifts from her Roman grandmother, was first introduced to the Princess five years ago by another royal client — the Duchess of York. She is said to have told the Duchess that she would marry John F. Kennedy Jr and become First Lady of America. The Duchess was so impressed that she urged the Princess to see her.

The Duchess has also consulted a Greek-born clairvoyant called Madame Vasso, who asks clients to sit under a blue plastic pyramid while she considers their energy levels. Madame Vasso, who taped-recorded telephone conversations with the Duchess, later wrote a book about their consultations and was widely condemned for her indiscretion.

It is understood that the Princess was keen to consult the spirit world about her friendship with Mr Fayed. However, her office at Kensington Palace declined to comment on the visit.

The Princess and Mr Fayed made the 250-mile round trip after taking off from Battersea helipad in southwest London. The helicopter landed in a field behind Mrs Rogers's house in the village of Lower Pilsley, where a group of schoolchildren quickly spotted the commotion and took photographs which appeared in yesterday's *Mirror*.

A spokesman for the Knightsbridge department store confirmed that the helicopter in the photographs belonged to Harrods. "It's one of our helicopters, but I can't say why it was there or who

was on it." According to villagers, the landing site had been marked out by two white lines for several days before the Princess's arrival. After the 90 minute consultation, the pair left in the helicopter — the Princess trying to avoid being photographed by hiding behind a bush.

Emma Radford, 11, said she spotted the Princess and raced home to fetch her camera. "When we came back, she was getting into the helicopter. I saw the man with her and it was her boyfriend. I've seen him in the papers."

"I got very cross with us and started shouting at us to go away. We were trying to scramble over barbed wire to try and get nearer and get a better picture. We were about 30ft away when we took the picture and then they got in the helicopter and left."

It is understood that Emma's family received £3,000 for the photographs and that they will go on holiday on the proceeds.

Mrs Rogers, who claims to be able to contact the spirits of dead children, has been consulted by parents of young victims of the Zebrugge ferry disaster. She also claims to be able to see the future, through a Roman crystal ball said to be several hundred years old.

Mrs Rogers makes no mention of her royal clients in her coming biography, titled *From One World To Another*, and will not be giving interviews on the subject, according to Robert Kirby, her literary agent. Should she



Diana, Princess of Wales, was said to be keen to consult the spirit world through the clairvoyant Rita Rogers, centre, about her friendship with Dodi Fayed



Medium who struck gold in pit village

By STEPHEN FARRELL

TALES of crystal balls being produced in pubs and psychic encounters in the Miners' Welfare Club yesterday dominated the former pit village where Rita Rogers receives flying visits from royalty.

Lower Pilsley in Derbyshire is an unlikely venue for a medium to set up business, but locals have accepted the raven-haired, gold-earringed Mrs Rogers, despite the fact that she is rarely glimpsed. Opinion is, however, divided on her clairvoyancy, except that it makes her a lot of money, judging by the stream of smart cars arriving at her detached redbrick home.

Few locals can afford her fee, which has risen from about £10 an hour when she first arrived in the area to about £80. One, however, swears by her. Colin Brailsford, 47, a sand plant operator, made the first of four

visits 11 years after getting in a "right state" over the loss of his father and business within a short period of time. She persuaded him to quit as a steward at the Pilsley Miners' Welfare Club where he first met her.

"I had never seen her before. I went up to her and she just turned and said, 'Is it you that wanted my help in here?'" Mr Brailsford said. "It was amazing, she knew things she could never have found out about me. She took my dad's ring off my finger and said, 'This is the man who sent me to have a word with you.'"

He was told to leave the club because he had an aura of negativity and should return to being a baker. If he did so, she claimed, he would never be unemployed again, but if he did not he would soon be "in a box". Mr



Rita Rogers's home, where she has received royalty

Brailsford said the prophecies came true. "I'm a very big believer. I would take more notice of her than I would a doctor."

He brought fellow welfare club members for a group session in which she talked to them individually in the front room of her house, passing on

messages from dead relatives and friends. "The most amazing thing was one night in The Star pub. She came in and put a crystal ball on the table," he said. "My mate picked it up and it sparkled like nothing. She told him he had got three children. He said, 'No, only two,' but she

insisted it was three and in fact his wife had had a miscarriage."

However, one villager has sad memories of the only time, driven by desperation after being told her four-year-old son was terminally ill with cancer, to seek Mrs Rogers's advice. Helen Priest, 37, landlady of The Commercial Inn, told how Mrs Rogers assured her in 1990 that her son Matthew would not die of a rare neuroblastoma, but less than 18 months later he was dead.

"She said, 'No one on either side of your family is going to die in the next five years.' My mother died soon afterwards. I'm not prepared to say that she doesn't help people. If she believes that she's helping people and those people believe that she is helping them, then that's got to be for the good. But she was wrong about something that was very important to me."



Emma: sold pictures to a newspaper

Leading article, page 19

Alarm as visitor attempts palace coo

By ALAN HAMILTON

MEMBERS of the Royal Household have been in something of a flap on discovering a visitor touring the state apartments of Buckingham Palace without having paid the £9 admission charge.

The palace had closed for the night on Monday, and cleaners were at work, when a pigeon flew through an open window of the Blue Drawing Room. Having taken a brief look at John Nash's magnificent Regency interior decoration, it continued its tour into the adjoining State Dining Room, which appeared to be more to its liking, as it perched on an ornate cornice near the ceiling. The staff tried to coax it down with food, but to no avail. Feeling that too much

excitement would cause it to do what pigeons do, they abandoned their efforts, closed the windows, and left it there for the night among all the fine paintwork under Nash's intricate ceiling.

On Tuesday, it had not moved far. Then it decided to move on to the East Gallery, where it remained all afternoon as some of the day's 7,000 paying customers shuffled past below.

By now, all the windows had been reopened to air the apartments on a particularly hot day, but it still showed no sign of leaving. Coincidentally, it had not yet reached some of the highlights of the official tour.

Eventually it tired of the East Gallery, and flew on to the Silk Tapestry Room, then the Picture Gallery, and finally

completed its visit with a quick circuit of the Throne Room. Only then did it leave, through another open window.

The Palace opened last Friday for its fifth annual, eight-week season. Timed tickets have until now successfully discouraged queue jumpers, and officials have not experienced such a flying visitor before.

Officials of the Royal Collection, which manages the annual public opening, were reluctant to discuss in detail whether the visitor had left the customary trail of evidence, but they admitted to finding one or two small deposits.

"It dropped in for a flying visit, and left on a wing and a prayer," said Dickie Arbiter, the Royal Collection spokesman. "It did not do any damage."

US court rules Imran is father of love child

FROM GILES WHITTELL IN LOS ANGELES

A LOS ANGELES judge has declared Imran Khan, the Pakistani cricketer turned politician, to be the legal father of an illegitimate child conceived during an affair with Seta White.

Ms White, a yoga teacher who lives in Beverly Hills, and whose father was the tycoon Lord White of Hull, publicly claimed that Mr Khan was her daughter's father while he was fighting to become Pakistan's Prime Minister in January's election. Mr Khan denied the claim. In Pakistan no one who admits to being the parent of an illegitimate child may run for public office.

Mr Khan, who was heavily defeated in the election, was yesterday declared to be the father of four-year-old Tyrian-Jade White by default after he had refused to take a blood test and reportedly had an offer to settle the case out of court turned down by Ms White, 36. "They tried to offer me money," she said, "but I wouldn't take it. It's not about money, it's about my daughter." Outside the Los Angeles County Superior Court yesterday Ms White added: "I feel relief. Now my daughter knows who her biological father is, and Mr Khan should apologise to his people."

A feminist lawyer, Gloria Allred, said court papers would be delivered to Mr Khan in Pakistan, where he



Seta White and Imran Khan: her allegations came to light while he was running in the Pakistani election

lives with his wife, Jemima, daughter of the late Sir James Goldsmith.

Ms Allred added: "Mr Khan should recognise that no game of politics is more important than his little daughter. I issue a challenge to him to come forward and take responsibility for his child."

Ms White claims that her daughter was conceived in October 1991 when, she says, an affair had taken place with Mr Khan between 1987 and 1988 was resumed. It was alleged that, on hearing that an ultrasound test during Ms White's pregnancy had shown that she was expecting a girl, Mr Khan was upset and urged her to have an abortion, saying the child "would not be able to play cricket". Ms White refused to

have an abortion and has kept Mr Khan informed of her daughter's progress since her birth, including sending him pictures of her. He has never seen Tyrian-Jade.

"He's been making excuses since January," Ms White said yesterday, displaying the judge's signed papers for photographers. "But now the truth is out."

Ms White has not yet sued Mr Khan for child support payments in the United States, but plans to do so in London as part of a similar paternity lawsuit which is expected to reach a conclusion next week.

Ms Allred had the final word yesterday saying: "It is not cricket for a father to deny his child in order to gain a political advantage."

Eubank fined for careless driving

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

THE former world boxing champion Chris Eubank was ordered to pay almost £1,000 yesterday in fines and costs for careless driving after scattering pedestrians on a pelican crossing as he sped through narrow streets blaring the horn of his Range Rover.

Dawn Walsley, for the prosecution, told magistrates at Brighton that Eubank appeared at high speed over the brow of a hill close to the railway station. "He drove on to the wrong side of the road, overtaking stationary vehicles approaching the red light at a pelican crossing," said Ms Walsley. "He caused pedestrians to take action to avoid being struck."

She said Eubank, of Hove, East Sussex, forced a BMW turning right to pull into the middle of the road to avoid a collision. Its driver then followed Eubank's car to the railway station, where the boxer leaped out and dashed inside, leaving both his front doors wide open.

Eubank told the court that he had not been in a hurry. "I have never driven like that," he said. But Ms Walsley reminded him of his earlier conviction for careless driving after he knocked down and killed a roadside workman. His licence also endorsed with six penalty points.

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Royal Court appoints unknown as director

Dalya Alberge reports on a much-coveted post in the theatre world

THE next artistic director of the Royal Court Theatre in London, renowned for making waves in the arts world and as a theatrical seedbed, is to be Ian Rickson, 33, a little-known associate director there since 1994.

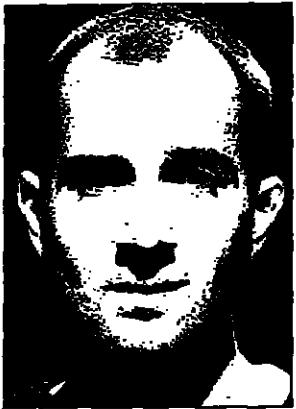
He will succeed the much acclaimed Stephen Daldry, who was appointed in 1991. Rickson takes up the job next month and will work alongside Daldry until the company returns to its refurbished Sloane Square home in the autumn of next year.

His directing credits for the company include Jez Butterworth's *Mojo*, a play about clubland gangsters, which won him Olivier awards and the Most Promising Newcomer in the *Evening Standard* awards of 1995.

One critic noted that "his productions are tight and bright, always well acted and stylish, sometimes to a fault". Another, reviewing *Mojo*, noted how "he pushes no particular view or technique, but thoughtfully and sensitively

serves the mood of whatever piece he works on". He has also worked at the Gate at Nottingham and the Chichester Festival Theatre. Rickson will be directing Kevin Elyot's new play, *The Day I Stood Still*, for the Royal National Theatre next January.

Daldry, who stepped down to pursue a film-making career with Working Title, the



Rickson: he succeeds Stephen Daldry

production company that made *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, is staying on to oversee the £25 million redevelopment of the Sloane Square building. He recruited Rickson from the company's youth theatre.

Acknowledging that Rickson was not a household name, he said: "But that's what they said about me. I was 31 when I came to this job. He is one of the most exciting young directors currently around. He's totally charming, very strong-willed, strong but not aggressive."

He added: "I have enjoyed working alongside Ian for five years and am totally confident he will carry the huge contribution he has already made to the Royal Court into his new role. I'm delighted, partly because I feel he's been very much developed by the Royal Court. Without doubt, he's done some of our major successes of the last five years."

Apart from directing, Rickson has been active in management in the past two

years. "Within the organisation, he's grown from strength to strength," said Daldry, who was not on the interviewing panel. "There was no doubt from the board's point of view that he was the man for the job. Senior figures were on that list. That's why it's a very courageous choice by the board to take Rickson."

John Mortimer, chairman of the Royal Court, described Rickson as "one of this country's most brilliant and exciting young directors".

Rickson was born in South London to what he has described as "an aspiring working-class family". He was 15 before he saw his first play, *The Caretaker* with Max Wall. At Essex University, he was inspired by Edward Bond, the writer-in-residence, and later worked with him as an actor. His work as a director has been mainly in new writing with companies such as Paines Plough and the King's Head Theatre.



One of eight osprey chicks brought to Rutland Water from Scotland last month, which have now taken to the air over the reservoir. No pair has nested in England for at least 150 years but it is hoped that other ospreys released at Rutland last year, and which migrated south, will return next year and breed

Camelot loses second director within a month

By Carol Midgley

CAMELOT was facing a fresh crisis yesterday after the second director this month announced his resignation.

Jon Kinsey, Camelot's director of marketing, was responsible for promoting Instant scratchcards, sales of which have fallen from a peak of £44.4 million to £14 million.

His decision to leave comes eight days after David Rigg, Camelot's director of communications, who was criticised in the recent "fat cat" pay row, also resigned suddenly. Mr Kinsey is to become marketing and strategy director at British Gas Trading.

Two more senior heads of department at Camelot who are also expected to leave in the next few weeks. The delay in their departure will enable them to pick up five-figure bonuses. Neil Dickens, the company's head of security who was investigating the leak of documents outlining the directors' pay, will also retire this year, but keep a part-time role.

Another major board director, Norman Hawkins, retired last year, picking up payments of £313,000. Sir Ron Dearing stood down as chairman due to ill health. Yesterday Came-

lot denied a crisis in its management.

Mr Kinsey recently defended Camelot's image, claiming the public had not gone sour on the National Lottery. "People have never been more in love with the lottery," he said. "It hasn't gone sour and is still the biggest impulse brand in the UK. Our overall sales are ahead of where we said they would be at this stage."

Last week it was reported that Camelot is so concerned about its public image that it is considering changing its name. Executives are believed to want to give it a less corporate feel. Louise White, Camelot's head of public affairs, told a specialist magazine there was "a hell of a lot to do in bringing a human face to Camelot".

CORRECTION

A feature on the Keswick family yesterday (page 27) included a photograph of Jonathan Powell, head of drama and co-productions at Carlton Television, in mistake for Jonathan Powell, Tony Blair's chief of staff.

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'Good guy' Biggs plans final hold-up

A DISHEVELLED Ronnie Biggs, who hobbles wearily around his modest home in Rio de Janeiro with a broken knee, looks more like a careworn grandfather than a crook who took part in the Great Train Robbery.

"I don't want to die in prison. I am a tired old man, near the end of my days," Biggs, 68, said, on hearing about the signing of a formal extradition treaty with Brazil.

The agreement came into effect yesterday after an exchange of documents between Keith Haskell, the Ambassador to Brazil, and Foreign Ministry officials in Brasilia. It allows Britain to request the extradition of its most infamous fugitive to serve the outstanding 29 years of his 30-year sentence.

But fresh doubts have arisen about whether the treaty will help. Although he said he is "ready to throw the towel in" and surrender amicably, his lawyers have already indicated they will appeal against the extradition.

They will try to use a statute of limitations, a Brazilian law which annuls punishment if a criminal succeeds in avoiding the authorities for more than 15 years. Biggs's lawyers also plan to appeal on the grounds that the same crime, committed in Brazil, would have resulted in a lesser sentence.

Supreme Court authorities who will study a possible extradition request have not ruled out handing Biggs over

Lawyers aim to foil Home Office plans to apply for the robber's extradition in the next few days, reports Gabriella Gamini

to British authorities, but whatever the outcome, they are likely to take months to decide. Meanwhile, Biggs will make the most of fact that he has been a good citizen since he took refuge in Rio de Janeiro in 1970.

"I have been a good guy and lived an honest life. Why would they want to lock me up now?" he said. "So much time has gone by and I am a harmless old fool," he added, with his rottweiler, Blitz, sitting by his feet.

Biggs claimed he had moved on from the days when

he took part in one of the crimes of the century, and bagged a share of £2.6 million (estimated to be worth £35 million today) in August 1963.

His "biggest regret" was the death of train driver Jack Mills, who was injured during the robbery. "The train driver's death lies heavily on my conscience. There is not one day that goes by when I don't think about it," he said.

"But I have lived a life of a recluse far away from my country and have had ample time to reflect on my wrongdoing. Jail is not always a

deterrent for a criminal. Most of the time it just leads people into a life of crime. People often turn to me for advice and I always discourage them from crooked ways," he added. Biggs served 13 months for armed robbery before jumping the wall at Wandsworth prison into a furniture removal van in 1965. He escaped to Paris where he spent £30,000 on a facelift, and then boarded a ship to Australia to join his wife and two children.

But he was lured away by a friend who showed him a romantic sunset photograph of Rio. "I looked at it and said that's the place for me," he recalled.

Plans to extradite him in 1974 failed because his Brazilian girlfriend at the time had a child with him. Michael, now 23, was for a long time the legal loophole which kept Biggs in Brazil, having a dependant in the country guaranteed him a visa until his son became 21.

Biggs is seen locally as an eccentric tourist attraction rather than a criminal. He says that the robbery money ran out years ago, and he now makes a living from charging tourists \$60 (£38) each for what he calls "The Ronnie Biggs Experience". It includes lunch at his poolside, having a "knees up" and hearing the story of the robbery.

Yesterday Home Office sources said an application for the extradition would be made within the next few days.



Ronnie Biggs at home with his rottweiler, Blitz. "Why lock me up now?" he said

Jail ban ends nuns' smuggling habits

By A Staff Reporter

TWO nuns caught smuggling tobacco and food to inmates in a top-security jail have been banned from prison visiting for life.

Sister Anna and Sister Annunciatina, who was nicknamed "St Bruno" by the inmates, were caught by prison guards taking tobacco, duck eggs, cheese and meat in their bags destined for prisoners at Kingston jail in Portsmouth.

The nuns, from Wickham, Hampshire, were interviewed by police amid claims that they had been smuggling luxury goods into the prison for several years. They were given official cautions and prison chiefs confirmed yesterday that a life ban had now been imposed on them carrying out further goodwill visits to the jail.

A Prison Service spokesman said that the decision had been taken in light of the police caution. Father Derek Reeve, the prison chaplain, plans to hold talks with Kingston's governor in the hope of getting the ban overturned. "The sisters are very upset," he said. They were not doing anything illegal — they were doing something they've been doing for years.

The nuns have been visiting lifers at Kingston, Britain's only jail exclusively for prisoners serving life sentences, for around 30 years. They have declined to comment about the ban.

"The train driver's death lies heavily on my conscience. There is not one day that goes by when I don't think about it"



Driver Jack Mills: died

Homes ablaze as storms strike the South East

By NIGEL HAWKES

SIX houses in Kent were struck by lightning as storms swept across southeast England early yesterday. Thousands of homes lost power during the bad weather.

The roof of a house in Rochester burst into flames and collapsed after being struck by lightning. Nobody was injured as the occupants were on holiday. A Kent Fire Brigade spokesman said: "We did not need a number for the house because you could see the fire for miles."

Lightning also damaged houses in Snodland, Allhallows, Sevenoaks and Sittingbourne. In Strood, rain caused floods up to 18in deep.

The storms cut power supplies to more than 15,000 homes. By breakfast, about half had been reconnected.

The problem has been localised areas of 50 or 60 people, but there has been a lot of these," an electricity company spokesman said.

The storms crossed Kent, Sussex, Surrey, Essex and London early in the morning, before moving into East Anglia. The rain brought relief from exceptionally humid

conditions, but forecasters expected it to be temporary. They forecast high temperatures until at least the end of the week.

A warning of heavy rain overnight in Scotland was issued by the Meteorological Office yesterday. The rain and thunderstorms were expected to break first over central and southern Scotland and then spread north, causing localised flooding.

Friends of the Earth has claimed that government information about air pollution consistently underestimates the problem. The environmental group said that the Government has described air quality as "good" on 94 per cent of the occasions when it exceeded the Government's own safe level.

Ozone levels are described as poor only when they exceed 90 parts per billion as a one-hour average, while the health standard of 50 ppb is set for an eight-hour period. Therefore, Friends of the Earth said, the standards were not directly comparable.

Forecast, page 22

Mice show how coffee perks up mornings

By NIGEL HAWKES
SCIENCE EDITOR

THE caffeine jolt that many people need to get moving in the morning has been explained with the aid of mice.

Rodents genetically engineered to lack the receptor in the brain to which caffeine locks on — so behaving as though they had had a surfeit of coffee — were found to be anxious and aggressive. They felt little pain and had increased blood pressure and heart rate. These observations fit in with clinical evidence that caffeine increases anxiety and diminishes the perception of pain.

Marc Parmentier and colleagues at the Free University of Brussels created the mice by removing the gene responsible for making the receptor, which is also locked on to by adenosine, a chemical important in many tissues. The mice showed that adenosine is important in the control of mood. In a commentary in the same issue of *Nature* in which the report appears, Solomon Snyder of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore says that the finding may lead to new painkillers.



Heinz and June Fellrich after their 1947 marriage, and the couple yesterday

Golden moment for couple who braved war prejudice

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

WHEN 18-year-old June Tull and Heinz Fellrich announced in 1947 that they were getting married, they got two sackfuls of hate mail.

They were the first couple to marry after the wartime ban on marrying prisoners of war was lifted, and today they celebrate their golden wedding anniversary with their six children, 14 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

"It will be the proudest day of my life, made even more special by the fact that so many thought we would never last," Mrs Fellrich, now 69, said yesterday.

"I will never forget when I announced to my mum that I

was marrying Heinz. She turned to me and said: 'I'll give you six months.'"

They met when Miss Tull spotted Mr Fellrich, 25, behind the wires of a prison camp in Southampton. She asked him to go for a walk, and soon the couple were courting regularly, although camp rules dictated that Mr Fellrich had to return before dusk.

After three weeks of secret meetings, Mrs Fellrich knew she had to tell her family. "It wasn't as bad as I'd imagined. But my aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents refused to have anything more to do with me if I carried on seeing Heinz." To this day she has still not seen many of them.

Mrs Fellrich was already pregnant when the prisoner of war marriage ban was lifted in July 1947, and the couple immediately booked a wedding date in August.

Soon the hate mail arrived. "Many of the letters were from women who had lost brothers, husbands, fathers and other relatives," she said. "People felt very strongly that I would be a traitor... But I was so in love and that was all that mattered."

The couple settled in Eastleigh, Southampton, where they still live. Mr Fellrich found work as a farmhand. "We had our family and our lives together," he said. "Nobody's prejudices could spoil that."

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Numberplate king reaps Net profit from new domain

Mark Henderson reports on the trade in Web sites

A FORMER personalised numberplate salesman is making thousands of pounds from companies launching themselves on the Internet, after his firm bought up hundreds of the most popular Web site names.

The music shop Tower Records and the car magazine *Auto Trader* are among the companies that have had to negotiate with Steve Jackson of the Preston-based Internet service provider UKIP, which owned the rights to names they wished to use on the Net.

Mr Jackson, 31, who founded UKIP five years ago with five partners, has registered more than 700 "domains" in the past 18 months, and has sold more than 30 at more than £1,000 each. This week Tower Records paid UKIP

£1,200 for tower.co.uk. UKIP also holds the rights to finance.co.uk, money.co.uk and boat.co.uk, and has cornered the market for cycling Web sites with bike, bikes, bicycle and bicycles. Finance.co.uk would set you back about £10,000, while the most expensive site registered by UKIP, car.co.uk, would cost £50,000.

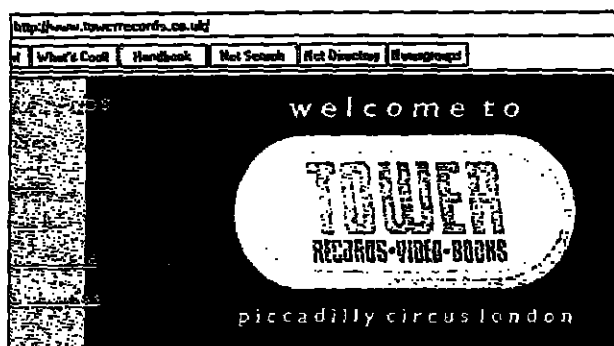
Mr Jackson, the only partner in the firm who does not have a background in computer programming, spent six years buying and selling personalised numberplates. "I noticed how similar the two markets were, and spotted a niche," he said. "We went through looking for all sorts of generic names people were likely to want, and registering them. We wouldn't dream of

touching someone's trademark."

Generic words such as car and money could be registered free of charge until a year ago, when the British licensing authority Nominet was set up. It charges an £80 administration fee; American Internet licensing authorities charge about \$100. It is a breach of copyright to register trademarks in this country, and Harrods recently reached an out-of-court settlement with a speculator who tried to register Harrods.co.uk.

Other Internet firms have also got in on the act. Domnames, a Southampton-based firm that registers domains for its clients, has registered the rights to gylney2000 and games2000. The director, John Ward, intends to lease these at £30 a time to companies wanting to set up Web sites for the next Olympics. "I will make a fortune," he said. He was offered \$150,000 for the games2000 domain, and has been threatened with legal action by the US Olympic Committee.

Companies are sanguine about having to pay to use the domains that suit them. Mary Carson, digital services manager of Tower Records, said: "I didn't have a choice, and I'm sure it would cost us a lot more in a year's time."



Tower Records on the Net: a UKIP customer



Steve Jackson, who has registered more than 700 desirable Web site names

Hospital chiefs prosecuted over safety lapses

By LIN JENKINS

THE managers of a large hospital who allegedly showed a blatant disregard for safety regulations are to face a landmark criminal prosecution.

So widespread was the failure to comply with the law on protection for nurses and patients that the Health and Safety Executive has taken the unprecedented step of bringing court action.

A routine inspection of Princess Margaret Hospital in Swindon discovered breaches of the rules governing such things as the removal of clinical waste including contaminated needles and infectious material, and proper maintenance of an area for post-mortem examinations.

It is alleged that the hospital had no secure unit for the containment of contagious diseases such as tuberculosis, which could be sealed and fumigated. Nor were there policies to deal with the risk of violence towards nurses, or the risks they faced handling patients manually, which is the prime cause of injury in the profession.

The Swindon and Marlborough NHS Trust, which runs the hospital, will appear before Swindon magistrates next Wednesday. The charge, under the 1992 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, alleges that hospital managers "failed to make appropriate arrangements for effective control of

preventive and protective measures to ensure the health and safety of employees and other people affected by their activities."

A spokeswoman for the Health and Safety Executive said: "This is the first time we have taken a trust to court for alleged bad practices without a specific accident having occurred. Since the breaches cover a whole raft of areas it was decided to bring court proceedings immediately rather than deal with it by way of enforcement notices."

Investigators allegedly found numerous breaches of regulations, and decided that they were all due to a failure of the managers to devise and implement proper health and safety policy.

The maximum penalty magistrates can impose on the trust is a £5,000 fine. However, if they feel their powers are inadequate they can refer the case to the Crown Court where the fine is unlimited.

Two elderly patients needed emergency treatment after a 7ft by 5ft pane of glass fell on them at the Princess Margaret Hospital on Tuesday. Both were treated in the hospital's accident and emergency department for minor injuries. They were taking part in an education session in a ward.

An investigation is under way into how the glass came loose. The incident is not connected with the HSE prosecution.

Leftists rally in appeal for even-handedness

By KATHRYN KNIGHT, OUR LEFT-HANDED CORRESPONDENT

WE WERE once condemned as sinister and unlucky, but yesterday hundreds of cack-handed, cow-pawed and gawp-handed citizens gathered to celebrate the condition that links them with Marilyn Monroe, Jack the Ripper and Prince William.

The sixth international Left-handers Day was celebrated with events including a right versus left cricket match and a southpaw corkscrew competition. Once condemned to spend schooldays with their left hands tied behind their backs, left-handers are now largely left in peace, but still struggle with a series of practical problems, according to the organiser, Lauren Milson.

"More and more gadgets are designed for convenience, but they are designed for right-handers' convenience," Mrs Milson said. "We're not campaigning for the world to

be left-handed, we just want it to be ambidextrous."

To that end, some of Britain's six million lefties went to Covent Garden's main piazza to test gadgets designed to make life easier. The "Pirouette" kettle swivels on its stand to make it easier to pour from either left or right. A left-hander's computer keyboard has the main function keys on the left.

More suited to the "things you never knew you needed" drawer were the left-hander's mug (slogan on the outside, left-handed ruler (numbers run right to left) and left-handed address book (index on the left). Mrs Milson said: "Some of these are just for fun, but there's been so much negativity in the past, with people suggesting we're bad luck, that we wanted to show we can be a positive force."

The word "left" comes from the Anglo-Saxon *lyft*, mean-

ing weak or broken. However, powerful figures who have favoured their left hand include Einstein, Picasso, Leonardo da Vinci and the last three US Presidents.

The Left-Handers Club was also hoping the day would highlight its campaign for recognition of left-handed children's special teaching needs. Few teachers realise that they need different tuition to be able to write easily and comfortably. Mrs Milson said: "A lot of teachers think they can just tell left-handed children to copy the way they write, but it is not as simple as that. Left-handers copying right-handed writing end up twisting their hands and bodies round to avoid getting in the way of the pen or dragging their hands across the ink, then in later life they are frustrated that they cannot write fast and their hands ache."

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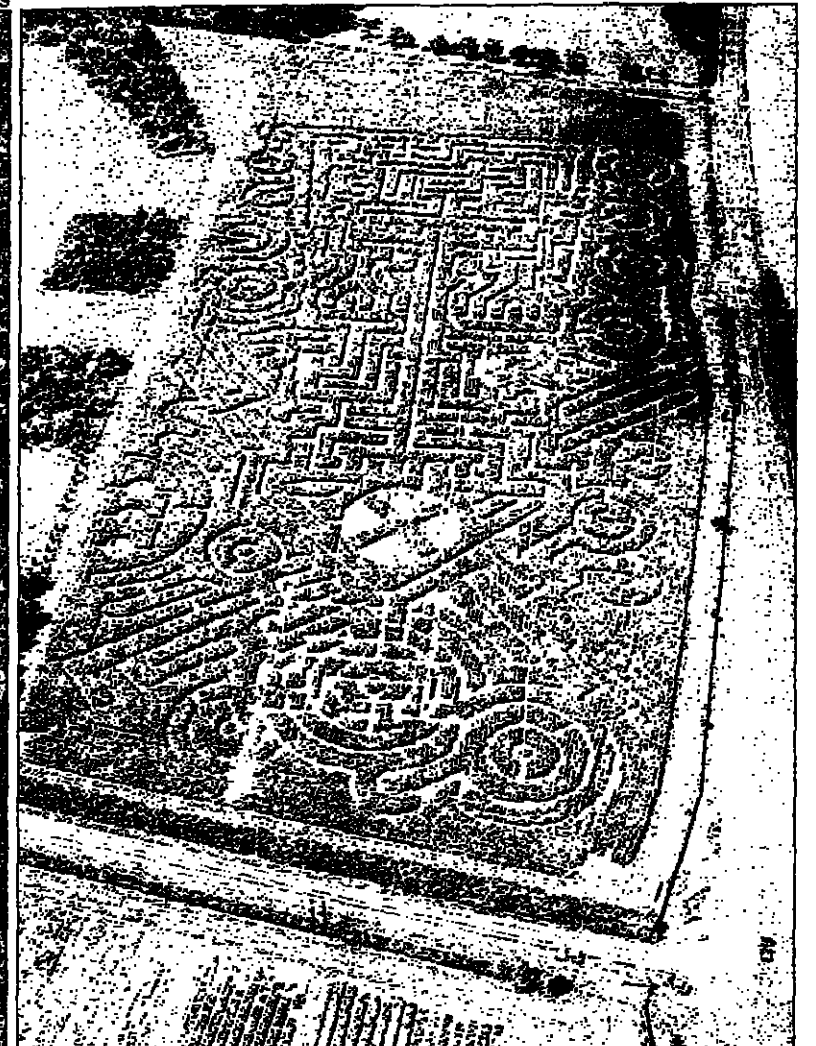
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Offer also applies to spouses

World's biggest maze is next cash crop



Visitors to the maze at Millets Farm are given flags on tall poles to wave if they get lost among the 8ft maize. There are 3.73 miles of paths within the maze, which is designed in the shape of a windmill



Adrian Fisher, the maze's designer

A CORNFIELD in Oxfordshire will for the next two months be the improbable setting for what is claimed to be the biggest maze in the world.

Cut from almost eight acres of 8ft-high maize at Millets Farm Centre near Abingdon, the labyrinth contains 3.73 miles of paths and junctions in the shape of a windmill. The craze for maize mazes began in the United States four years ago, where the bizarre crop formations have attracted tens of thousands of visitors. Farming entrepreneurs in Britain are hoping the money-spinning idea will catch on here.

For Nigel Carter, managing director of the 1,000-acre Millets Farm, the maize maze is only the latest example of diversifying the business, which already includes a farm shop, restaurant, garden centre and pick-your-own fruit and vegetable business.

"I first heard of the idea for a maize maze at a cocktail party earlier this year," he said. "I decided to give it a try as I had

An enterprising farmer in Oxfordshire hopes to supplement his income by persuading hundreds of visitors to get lost, reports Michael Hornsby

a perfect patch of land available." Mr Carter hired the services of Adrian Fisher, who runs a company in Portsmouth which has designed 150 mazes of every conceivable size and shape in countries around the world, from conventional hedges to brick and mosaic pavements, mirrors and waterfalls.

"The world maze record is the horticultural equivalent of the America's Cup," Mr Fisher said. "It has been broken several times in the United States in recent years, so it was high time for Britain to put in a challenge." He has designed several cornfield mazes in the United States, including one with 3.01 miles of paths in Detroit in 1996, until now the biggest on record.

The maize was sown in April. When it reached nine inches, the designers pulled

out the young shoots to leave a network of bare paths, working from a paper plan.

Mr Carter says the creation of the maze has cost him £10,000, but he hopes to attract enough visitors to turn a profit. Visitors are supplied with a map and flags on long poles which they can wave if they get hopelessly lost. T-shirts are on sale at the exit bearing the slogan "I was amazed and confused".

"We hope we are not going to lose anyone and find a pile of moulder bones in some corner of the field when we come to harvest the crop," Mr Carter's wife, Juliet, said. "We have a rule that all children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult."

"There are viewing platforms which people can climb onto to get their

bearings and a number of well-signed emergency exits. We also have a loud-speaker system and can call on anyone still in the maze at the end of the day to wave their flags. If the worst comes to the worst, it would be easy to break out."

A party of children from King Alfred's School in Wantage, who were sent on a trial run through the maze yesterday, solved the puzzle within 20 minutes. Tanya McCormack, 15, said: "It was easier than I expected, though I was glad that we had the map." Lisa Steel, also 15, said: "It was brilliant. We did get lost once and went round in circles."

Mr Fisher's obsession with mazes began more than 20 years ago when he created one in his father's three-acre garden in Dorset. But his career really took off after he wrote a letter to *The*

Times in 1980. "I had heard Dr Robert Runcie, in his enthronement sermon on becoming Archbishop of Canterbury, use the metaphor of the maze to describe the human journey through life."

"I wrote to *The Times* pointing out that mazes had a long religious history, which included the pavement mazes laid in the stone floors of Gothic cathedrals in France."

As a result, Mr Fisher received his first major commission, the creation of a brick-path maze, featuring much Christian symbolism, in a large garden near Henley-on-Thames. Dr Runcie opened the maze.

Starting today, the Millets Farm maze is open to the public from 10am to 6pm (last admissions 4.30pm) every Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday from today until the corn cobs are harvested in late October to provide winter feed for Mr Carter's herd of dairy cows. Entry costs £3 for adults, £2 for children and £10 for a family ticket.

Children to cost £100,000 each

No, it's not a new tax on children. Worse, this is the real cost you can expect to spend bringing up a child if you are an ordinary family on an average income. And that's after you've taken child benefit into account.

And if your child goes into private school and is likely to go onward to university, you could easily be looking at three times that.

These shock findings come from 'What Price a Child?', an investigative study into the cost of child-rearing by well-known consumer journalist and broadcaster Jan Walsh.

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Insurer urges wealthy to wear cheap watches

Stewart Tendler on a six-point checklist to discourage 'Rolex raiders'

AN INSURER has advised wealthy clients to wear cheap watches and costume jewellery to discourage attacks by "Rolex raiders". Affluent families have also been told not to pose for magazines such as *Hellot* and *Tatler* wearing their best jewellery, and to keep valuable paintings, furniture and objects out of photographs taken at home.

Scotland Yard estimates that there have been about 250 street robberies in affluent areas in the nine months to June. Michael Green, chairman of Carlton Communications, and his wife Theresa lost a £1,000 necklace and cash when attacked outside their Mayfair home in April. The wife of Bernard Ecclestone, the Formula One racing chief, had a £65,000 diamond ring taken.

The six-point crime prevention plan was sent to 600 clients by Nordstern, a City insurance company that specialises in fine art and a wealthy clientele. It was drawn up by two former

Scotland Yard officers: Charles Hill was a detective chief inspector with Scotland Yard's arts and antiques squad, and finished his police career investigating Rolex robbers in the Belgravia area; Stephen Flack was a crime prevention officer working for the Flying Squad.

Mr Hill said Rolex robbers were "seasonal animals" who operated widely in summer when expensive watches and jewellery were more easily visible. "It is foolhardy for wealthy people to wear really

valuable things when they are out in the summer," he said. In his letter to clients, Mr Hill said that the summer rise in muggings had become "an annual event" in Belgravia, Mayfair, Kensington and Chelsea. Nordstern has had at least one claim of more than £10,000 for a stolen Rolex.

The crime prevention advice includes:

□ Avoid wearing a valuable watch or jewellery with short-sleeved clothes.

□ Consider using an inexpensive watch or cheap jewellery

for everyday wear. "Rolex and other manufacturers of valuable watches and jewellery may not thank you but discerning thieves are less likely to target you in the street."

□ Resist the "temptation to appear in glossy magazine photographs with your jewels revealed to the world. Criminals in and out of prison spend hours on their research and are some of those magazines' most avid readers."

□ Take particular care when parking. In car parks, try to find a space near the attendant's kiosk and always avoid isolated spots.

□ Discourage house-to-house callers. Take descriptions of suspicious cars or individuals.

□ Carry a portable alarm.

A spokeswoman for Scotland Yard said detectives thought that the advice was sensible, although costume jewellery might still attract thieves. Mr Hill said that many thieves were capable of spotting a fake Rolex from a few feet away, and would not then bother to attack.

Decoy plan goes wrong

An undercover detective posing as an affluent Middle-Eastern businessman to trap Rolex raiders was injured when a robber attacked him (Stewart Tendler writes). The robber was chased by police but escaped in a Mercedes found abandoned yesterday.

Detective Constable Shaikh Ali, 31, was walking in Mayfair late on Tuesday night. A robber approached with a knife and there was a struggle. An unmarked police car was supposed to move in but was blocked by traffic.

The operation is part of a drive by 40 officers against the thefts. Scotland Yard has been running a campaign to curb the raiders under Operation Eagle Eye, aimed at street robbers.



Heather Shram with her father Robert yesterday. He donated her one of his kidneys in a transplant last week

Daughter's smile made transplant all worthwhile

BY A STAFF REPORTER

A MAN who flew 3,000 miles to donate a kidney to his teenage daughter told yesterday of how seeing her smile after the operation had made it all worthwhile.

Robert Shram, 47, who travelled from America, said that deciding to go ahead with the transplant "makes me feel great".

His daughter Heather has suffered from kidney disease since childhood. The pair held hands as they spoke, at the Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, about the successful operations.

Miss Shram, 18, from Exmouth, receives the results of her A levels in mathematics, psychology and English today. She said that having one of her father's kidneys "felt great". She first had a kidney transplant at the age of 7, but her body rejected the organ seven years later and she had to resume dialysis treatment. "I feel better than after the last transplant - I feel so much stronger."

Mr Shram, an engineer who is remarried and lives in Philadelphia, said that, contrary to his expectations, he had not been nervous about the surgery. "The night before the operation I went out to the pub for a beer. I asked one of

the nurses if it would be OK, and I had some Guinness."

Heather's mother Barbara had offered to donate a kidney but was found to be incompatible. Father and daughter were in adjoining theatres for the operations, which took more than six hours. Mr Shram recalled that, afterwards, he had seen a smiling Heather walking towards him down the hospital corridor. The sight had made him feel that "everything was worth it".

Justin Morgan, the surgeon who carried out the transplant, praised Miss Shram as "a very brave girl" for coping with years of dialysis. She was "very well" after the operation and the kidney was "working nicely", said Mr Morgan. Her father was making "a nice recovery" and should be back to full health within three months.

Miss Shram, a student at Exmouth Community College, who wants to study mathematics at university, said she was hoping to join an athletics club, take up running and jumping again, and compete in the British Transplant Games once more. As a child, she won six medals, four of them gold, at the games.

Airline asks volunteers to stay on holiday isle

BY A STAFF REPORTER

AN AIRLINE flying 140 people home from Greece had to ask for ten volunteers to stay in the departure lounge after blaming the heat for unexpected weight restrictions. The rest flew without their luggage, which was unloaded to allow the plane to get into the air.

The travellers were told that it was an act of God, and face a flight for compensation. A spokeswoman for Peach Air, a subsidiary of Caledonian Airways, said: "It was so hot - over 40C - that weight restrictions were placed on the flight."

The heat and poor air quality on Zakynthos meant the Boeing jet could take off only with a reduced payload. Cosmar, the tour operator, said: "It was a series of circumstances beyond our control. It was an act of God."

Peter Young, 25, of Brandon, Durham, a factory worker who was with his girlfriend, Vicky Marr, said: "It was only as we took off that we were told our luggage wasn't coming with us."

Ms Marr, 17, said: "No one could quite believe it when a man from the tour firm stood on a chair in the departure lounge and asked for volunteers not to get on the flight."

"Nobody seemed in a rush to volunteer. From what I could tell they just told the last ten people in the queue that they wouldn't be able to fly."

The passengers who were left behind had to wait for the next available flight.

Heathrow battle with luggage backlog

BY HARVEY ELLIOTT
AIR CORRESPONDENT

THOUSANDS of airline passengers have taken off from Heathrow without their luggage this summer because of a near collapse of the baggage handling system.

At least 10,000 pieces of luggage, including a wedding gown's outfit and nine sets of drums, have gone astray because of equipment failures and new security measures.

British Airways, the airport's biggest customer, had 2,000 bags left behind at the end of one day last week. The Celtic Inn Manawatu Pipe Band, from New Zealand, found that nine sets of drums and 12 suitcases were missing. A couple travelling from Madrid to Edinburgh to get married were left with only the bride's dress.

Heathrow normally handles 120,000 passengers on a busy day but recently has had up to 150,000.

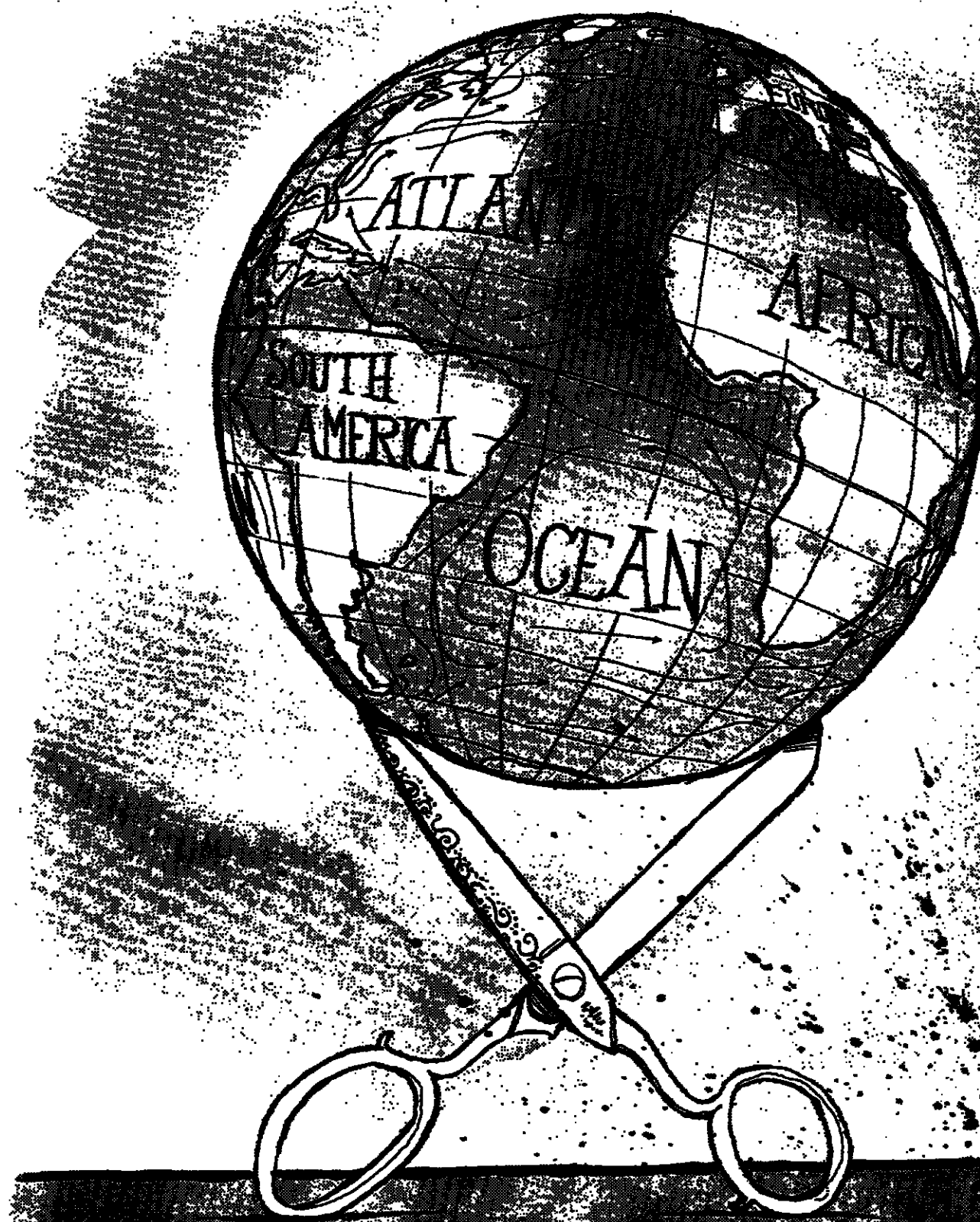
New security procedures to match departing passengers with each piece of luggage and to screen every bag as it is put into the hold, came into force on August 1.

BA said: "We are taking on an additional 150 baggage handlers to help, installing new equipment as fast as we can and having people ready to rush to any problem area."

□ Britain's seven main airports handled 30.2 million passengers last month, up 1 per cent on July 1996 and the highest monthly figure since

Travel, page 20

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Pupils desert traditional subjects

Fears of poor marks and career rivalry are boosting applied courses, reports John O'Leary, Education Editor

TEENAGERS are flocking into applied subjects such as business studies and sports science at the expense of traditional academic A levels, the national breakdown of this year's results shows.

While subjects such as mathematics, physics and economics recorded a modest increase in pupils or even a decline, general studies and a number of newer courses, such as media studies, boomed. Sport and physical education attracted almost a third more candidates than last year.

A 1.3 per cent rise in the overall pass rate was also concentrated in the non-traditional subjects. The proportion of high grades rose sharply in business studies and physical education.

The total number sitting A level failed to keep pace with

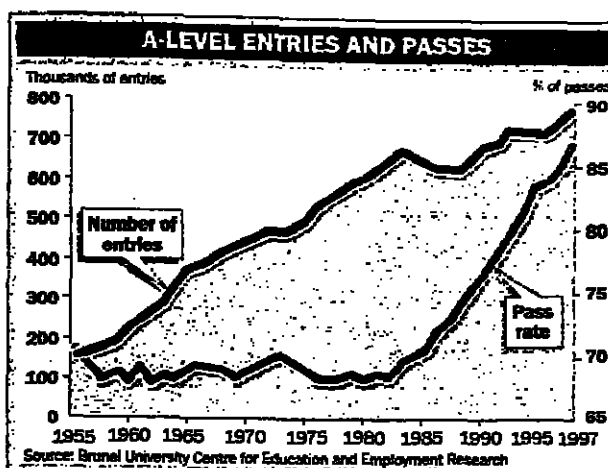
the rise in the 18-year-old population. Although the 776,115 entries represented a 5.2 per cent increase on last year, the age group taking most of the examinations was 8.6 per cent larger.

Kathleen Tattersall, representing the examination boards, said more students appeared to have been attracted to GNVQ courses, which are now more widely available. "We cannot be sure at this stage whether they are taking more vocational courses or fewer examinations altogether, but the figures show that students recognise A level as a passport to higher education or employment."

Ms Tattersall said she hoped this year's candidates would be spared the annual

controversy over A-level standards. "Candidates can be proud of their success in a tough and rigorous examination. The results are a clear reflection of their attainments and of the boards' maintenance of high standards in the interests of students and the educational system."

Professor Alan Smithers, who heads Brunel University's Centre for Education and Employment Research, said the pass rise reflected a continuing change in the function of A level, which had become a "badge of achievement" as much as a selection tool for higher education. The rise in pass rate from 68 per cent in 1982 to 87 per cent this year would produce a 100 per cent success rate within ten years if



the current rate of progress continued. Professor Smithers said: "The question is whether

A level will continue to serve the needs of the top research universities, which need to identify the most talented ap-

plicants. There must be a possibility that they will decide it does not, and will bring in something that does the job for them."

The 16 per cent of entries attracting A grades was unchanged from last year, with the next grades accounting for most of the increase in the pass rate. More than 55 per cent of entries reached the top three grades, compared with 53.8 per cent in 1996.

As in previous years, the proportion of top grades varied widely between subjects. In mathematics, for example, more than a quarter of candidates were awarded A grades, but fewer than one in nine reached the same mark in law.

Biology, with almost 9 per cent more candidates, was

among the few traditional subjects to see the increase in entries outpace the growth in the number of 18-year-olds. General studies, which saw a 10 per cent increase in candidates in 1996, recorded 15 per cent more entries this summer — the biggest increase of any subject. Business studies was close behind, with a 14.6 per cent rise.

Professor Smithers said that teenagers were avoiding traditional subjects in which they feared they might score poorly. "They are going for subjects that interest them, like sport, but as a nation we do need students in subjects like physics and French."

Ms Tattersall said, however, that the changes showed that students were thinking

ahead to their likely careers. "They are moving out of economics and into business studies, for example, because they like the applied nature of the courses. This is not devaluing A level in any way."

Entries for AS-level examinations increased by 6.6 per cent, after an 11 per cent rise in 1996. Biology, general studies, mathematics and psychology accounted for most of the increase. The overall pass rate declined slightly. The course, which was introduced to provide more breadth to sixth-form study, is expected to be revamped in 1999.

Fewer than 10 per cent of the 62,000 AS-level entries reached the top grade. In a number of subjects, including chemistry, computing and media studies, fewer than one candidate in 20 received an A grade.

Thousands in dilemma over cost of gap year

Those who did not plan ahead will lose out, reports Mark Henderson

STUDENTS planning a gap year before university to gain work experience, travel or earn money, face a doubly tense time as A-level results drop on their doormats today. Not only will they discover whether their grades are good enough for a university place but they must also decide whether to continue with plans for a year off.

The Government announced yesterday that all 19,000 students who applied through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service to start university in 1998, before the deadline last December, will be exempt from the £1,000 course fees which come in next year. But the estimated 50,000 who did not plan so carefully ahead will have to pay the fees if they continue with plans to take a year off.

Russell Goldman, 18, from Ilford, east London, is reconsidering his plans to go to university after discovering he will have to pay tuition fees. He had originally applied to study law, but decided against that as a career and declined his offers, intending to reapply

for business degrees after his A-level results. He has arranged to spend six months working for Marks & Spencer during his year out.

"I may decide against going to university, particularly if my results do not go as well as predicted," Mr Goldman said. "I have a great opportunity to start work with a top firm, and there is every chance I could get something permanent there. There is little point paying to do a degree if it offers me less than a job."

Another alternative was to go through the clearing system to secure a place before tuition fees come in, he said. "On balance, I will probably still take the year out, but if I do very well I would have to consider trying to get a good place through clearing. I don't want to leave college up to my eyes in debt."

Marks & Spencer takes 40 school-leavers with A levels or GNVQs each year on a six-month paid work placement. The teenagers are assigned to a store, where they spend time in different departments in a managerial role. Successful students are guaranteed an in-



Dean Chapman, who has arranged to work in a bakery's engineering department before university next year

terview for a permanent job, whether or not they go on to university.

David Hornig, 18, from Reading, had originally intended to apply for a university place after his A level results came out today. He decided to delay his application to give him more time to consider what he wanted to do.

After hearing that he will have to pay tuition fees if he

starts in 1998, he has deferred his university plans still further. "I want to work for a few years, to build up some cash before going to university as a mature student, a few years down the line," he said. "I'm already working at an outdoor shop, and I will be working for the Royal Mail at nights too."

In January, David plans to go on an expedition to Nepal for five months. He still intends to go to the university eventually despite the announcement on tuition fees.

"I still don't regret waiting to apply, and I won't go for clearing as I still don't know what to do," he said. "There is no point going to do a course I am not happy with."

Dean Chapman, 18, from Ollerton, Nottinghamshire, has an offer to read mechanical engineering at Coventry,

depending on his results. He will be spending a year working for the Riverside Bakery in Nottingham, which is owned by Northern Foods, as part of the Year in Industry scheme. Under this scheme, gap-year students are placed with businesses for a year, gaining valuable work experience. Mr Chapman will be working in the bakery's engineering department, helping with the installation of equipment.

"I am getting a year's paid work and lots of experience that will stand me in good stead later on. It seems people are going to miss out on opportunities like this for financial reasons in future. That's wrong."

Leading article, page 19



David Hornig: he has deferred university

Helping students who don't make the grade

Beryl Dixon, a college adviser, describes her tactics

EVERY August I get the same nightmare. I am sitting an examination, and the paper is not only impossibly hard, it is on a subject I have not studied. If that's my nightmare, goodness knows what makes the students.

It is as hard as ever to see a macho 18-year-old fighting back tears. As the envelopes are opened, everyone involved — students, parents, teachers and advisers — is tense. How can we help them? By being as supportive as possible. By being there when they collect the results.

I pick up a supply of tissues and head for college. We don't believe in putting lists on a noticeboard. Students are given their results in person by volunteer members of staff.

The unfortunate are passed to me and an adviser from the careers service. We commandeer offices and phones, and encourage the near-misses to contact their universities. Often, they get an immediate answer. Sometimes they must wait. Many a grade or two down are accepted. (Tissues are not just for the unsuccessful. Last year one girl was in floods of tears. "Oh dear," I began. "No, they're taking me," she sobbed.)

Then we make appointments to discuss strategy with the ones who, as far as we can tell, will need to consider alternatives. Should they go through clearing? Resit? Look for work? Only they can decide. We point out pros and

cons, and discourage hasty decisions. We make sure they know how to use sources of vacancy information.

In the past, I rang admissions tutors on behalf of applicants. Now students are encouraged to make contact. They may need pushing. We have staff available if a reference is needed.

There are inevitable disappointments — some seem most unfair — for students

Her father was disgusted. His colleagues boasted about their children, but he couldn't

who are rejected by popular institutions that can afford to insist on AAB, despite an ABB. Then there are the students (and parents) who cannot accept their results.

Sometimes persistence pays. We had a case where nobody could believe the low grade awarded to a particular student. She was rejected. I phoned. The admissions tutor sounded weary. I was about the fourth that day. A teaching colleague stated that he was prepared to stake his reputation on this one: he had

never pleaded a special case before. He wrote to that effect. It was not going to work. The course was full. She could phone the following week, however, in case a place became vacant. Finally, someone dropped out and she was reluctantly accepted. My colleague's reputation was ultimately saved when her remark moved her up two grades.

There are wonderfully supportive parents and, occasionally, the less supportive ones. Also last year, a girl cried on my shoulder and said her father was disgusted with her: all of his colleagues were boasting about their children's results and he could not join in.

What can parents do if the results are disappointing?

Encourage students to phone universities. Tell them that admissions staff are human. Many are parents themselves and they know how stressful a time this is.

If you can, take time off and be available to act as chauffeur to open days and interviews.

Tell them it is not the end of the world! There are plenty of successful people who did not make their first choice of course or career.

Beryl Dixon is careers and higher education adviser at Cricklade College, Andover.

Another rise in pass rates, but the critics have been silenced

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

PUNDITS' carping over A-level standards, which so infuriates teachers and parents on results day, was strangely subdued this year despite another significant rise in pass rates.

The change of Government has robbed some of the most vocal critics of their platform, and the same message is no longer newsworthy. Whatever the reason, analysis of the results took second place to the prospects for university entry.

In some respects, however, this is a watershed year for the A level, which deserves closer scrutiny. Almost a third of the candidates took modular A levels — twice the number in 1996 — and the impact is clearly visible in the pattern of results.

Studies have shown that the building-block approach to A level has no effect on the proportion of top grades, but it does cut the failure rate and boosts the numbers in the middle categories. That is precisely what happened: there was no increase in A grades, but the overall pass rate improved as the proportion of Bs and Cs rose.

There is no mystery about what accounts for the trend. Students who can see from their early modular tests that they are going to fail simply do not register their results, and the ability to retake modules allows strugglers to make modest improvements.

Candidates still have to reach the same standard, so there should be no lowering of

quality. Indeed, by setting tests in the first year of A-level study, modular courses may be more demanding. The chief doubt remains over the degree to which piecemeal testing fails to leave students with a rounded view of their subject.

Such questions will loom large in the Government's review of A levels. Baroness Blackstone makes clear in today's *Times* that the examination itself is not under threat, but there will still be important changes to the sixth-form curriculum before the end of the decade. Conservative ministers were planning to tighten up the rules on modular courses to ensure a single standard: today's results can only encourage their successors to do likewise.

The results posted in schools and colleges today include the first modular courses in geography, business studies, economics and politics. Courses with terminal examinations are now in a minority in English, mathematics, chemistry and physics. The trend is unlikely to be reversed by a Government keen to hit ambitious qualifications targets as well as encouraging an enthusiasm for education.

Modular courses will help with both: few students who experience them would go back to the traditional ways. If the status of A level is to be preserved, however, there cannot be one rule for the old guard and one for the new.

Tessa Blackstone, page 18

1997 A-LEVEL RESULTS (1996 results in brackets)									
Subject	A	B	C	D	E	N	No sat	% of total	% of total
Art and Design subjects	20.8 (19.4)	41.2 (39.4)	65.5 (63.4)	84.7 (82.2)	94.9 (93.7)	98.8 (96.5)	35,289 (33,782)	4.5 (4.6)	4.5
Biology	14.6 (13.8)	34.2 (32.5)	53.3 (51.7)	71.0 (69.8)	85.6 (84.4)	94.4 (93.7)	58,534 (51,094)	7.3 (7.0)	7.3
Business Studies	7.6 (7.7)	26.7 (23.1)	50.2 (44.5)	71.4 (65.6)	86.2 (82.2)	94.9 (91.9)	33,359 (29,100)	4.3 (3.9)	4.3
Chemistry	20.7 (20.7)	42.3 (40.7)	60.6 (59.1)	75.5 (74.1)	87.5 (86.1)	94.9 (94.1)	42,458 (40,458)	5.5 (5.5)	5.5
Classical subjects	24.7 (24.9)	46.5 (46.5)	68.8 (68.8)	82.7 (82.7)	91.8 (91.8)	96.4 (96.4)	8,451 (7,345)	0.8 (1.0)	0.8
Communication Studies	12.2 (11.5)	30.8 (27.7)	48.5 (44.7)	65.6 (61.7)	80.4 (77.7)	89.7 (88.1)	4,783 (5,077)	0.6 (0.7)	0.6
Computing	9.7 (10.5)	22.6 (23.4)	40.6 (41.5)	60.4 (60.9)	77.6 (77.8)	88.8 (89.0)	12,149 (10,887)	1.8 (1.4)	1.8
Economics	16.5 (15.0)	33.8 (31.1)	52.5 (49.2)	70.5 (68.9)	81.9 (81.7)	91.9 (91.1)	24,580 (24,580)	3.3 (3.2)	3.3
English	14.3 (14.5)	33.2 (33.9)	55.9 (55.7)	75.5 (75.8)	92.0 (91.1)	97.6 (97.3)	83,546 (86,827)	12.1 (12.0)	12.1
Expressive Arts	10.2 (10.1)	28.9 (26.9)	50.8 (49.8)	72.5 (70.4)	87.7 (86.0)	94.9 (94.5)	10,882 (9,619)	1.4 (1.3)	1.4
French	20.2 (20.9)	40.1 (38.9)	59.7 (59.2)	78.4 (76.5)	95.4 (94.9)	98.5 (98.9)	25,916 (27,400)	3.3 (3.7)	3.3
General Studies	13.8 (14.0)	30.0 (29.2)	48.8 (49.4)	68.4 (68.9)	84.1 (84.1)	93.5 (93.5)	82,114 (83,454)	9.4 (8.6)	9.4
Geography	12.0 (13.8)	34.0 (31.9)	57.2 (50.9)	76.6 (69.6)	89.9 (83.4)	96.8 (92.0)	43,641 (42,876)	5.6 (5.8)	5.6
German	23.5 (23.6)	42.8 (41.9)	60.8 (60.8)	77.4 (77.8)	89.2 (89.6)	95.7 (96.3)	10,561 (10,719)	1.4 (1.5)	1.4
History	14.7 (14.5)	33.9 (31.8)	54.5 (52.7)	73.2 (71.8)	88.5 (86.8)	93.9 (93.8)	42,547 (43,355)	5.5 (5.9)	5.5
Home Economics	9.6 (10.8)	26.7 (29.2)	48.5 (51.3)	70.9 (72.4)	85.9 (88.6)	94.1 (94.9)	2,512 (2,620)	0.3 (0.4)	0.3
Law	11.4 (10.8)	23.7 (22.9)	40.5 (38.5)	57.4 (56.1)	73.0 (71.5)	84.1 (83.0)	11,550 (11,882)	1.5 (1.6)	1.5
Mathematics	27.0 (27.0)	47.2 (46.0)	64.3 (63.0)	78.3 (77.1)	88.7 (88.0)	94.8 (94.4)	68,142 (67,442)	8.0 (8.1)	8.0
Media/Film/TV Studies	10.8 (10.6)	28.2 (28.3)	58.5 (57.5)	80.8 (82.3)	93.5 (94.4)	97.8 (98.2)	11,517 (8,883)	1.5 (1.2)	1.5
Music	19.2 (19.3)	40.0 (38.7)	64.0 (63.0)	82.6 (82.0)	93.6 (93.5)	98.1 (98.4)	6,916 (6,518)	0.9 (0.9)	0.9
Other Modern Languages	30.4 (29.4)	54.2 (51.5)	71.3 (70.9)	83.9 (82.9)	90.9 (91.3)	95.0 (95.7)	5,601 (5,431)	0.7 (0.7)	0.7
Physics	21.5 (20.6)	42.8 (39.7)	61.2 (57.6)	76.5 (73.1)	87.8 (85.9)	96.0 (94.2)	33,508 (32,801)	4.3 (4.4)	4.3
Political Studies	13.6 (14.6)	36.9 (35.9)	58.8 (57.3)	78.0 (75.9)	88.8 (86.3)	94.2 (93.9)	10,827 (11,292)	1.4 (1.5)	1.4
Psychology	11.0 (11.2)	28.4 (28.1)	47.8 (48.4)	66.2 (64.3)	80.3 (79.4)	90.2 (88.2)	27,209 (23,877)	3.5 (3.2)	3.5
Religious Studies	14.1 (14.3)	33.1 (34.1)	57.0 (57.7)	77.4 (77.5)	89.9 (89.7)	95.6 (95.7)	9,261 (9,033)	1.2 (1.2)	1.2
Science	11.4 (11.0)	26.8 (28.4)	48.4 (47.2)	68.6 (68.5)	85.3 (84.3)	94.5 (93.9)	5,621 (5,141)	0.7 (0.7)	0.7
Sociology	11.0 (10.9)	27.1 (26.0)	43.4 (42.4)	60.3 (59.9)	75.9 (74.8)	85.7 (84.2)	30,139 (28,871)	3.9 (3.7)	3.9
Spanish	24.2 (23.8)	45.8 (45.8)	65.2 (64.8)	81.0 (80.4)	90.4 (90.5)	95.7 (95.6)	5,826 (5,232)	0.7 (0.7)	0.7
Sport/PE Studies	8.7 (8.7)	20.1 (20.1)	42.7 (42.7)	68.6 (68.6)	88.4 (88.4)	96.8 (96.6)	13,102 (9,732)	1.7 (1.3)	1.7
Technology subjects	12.8 (12.4)	27.8 (26.9)	52.2 (50.6)	74.9 (73.5)	88.7 (88.3)	96.8 (96.2)	11,840 (11,081)	1.5 (1.5)	1.5
Welsh	18.6 (17.1)	43.2 (41.2)	66.9 (67.7)	84.4 (85.9)	96.7 (99.2)	99.5 (99.2)	967 (974)	0.1 (0.1)	0.1
All Other Subjects	12.5 (12.5)	29.9 (30.2)	47.8 (45.8)	64.3 (62.0)	77.9 (75.7)	85.8 (85.0)	9,095 (9,594)	1.2 (1.3)	1.2
Total	16.0 (16.0)	34.9 (34.0)	55.2 (53.8)	73.7 (72.1)	87.1 (85.8)	94.5 (93.6)	776,115 (739,163)	100.0 (100.0)	100.0

Figures are cumulative percentages, rounded, so that subject totals may not add up to 100.

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The temporary wood village that put down roots

THE village of wooden houses put up in 1917 was supposed to last only a few years. But 80 years later, the homes are still in excellent condition with not a single woodworm in sight.

Now the residents of Austin Village at Longbridge, Birmingham, have won a seven-year campaign for conservation status for their homes. The 199 cedarwood bungalows will thus remain a slice of British housing heritage. Residents must now ask Birmingham City Council before they put up a satellite dish or add a conservatory.

Austin Village was built by the car pioneer Herbert Austin so that his workers could live close to the factory in Longbridge, which in 1917 was producing war munitions.

George Drywood, a spokesman for the Austin Village Preservation Society, said: "We started campaigning in 1990, and then set up the society a few years later to add weight to our cause. It has

Herbert Austin's bungalows for car workers were not meant to last.

Now they are to be preserved

taken this long for Birmingham City Council's bureaucracy to do something about it. We were just worried about the future of the village. We knew how special these bungalows are, but we wanted to conserve them so that no one else could get their hands on some 80-year-old wooden bungalows."

Austin ordered the bungalows from American makers in Bay City, Michigan, and they were shipped in kit form. Mr Drywood said: "They were ready to assemble with nails

and screws included, like a Meccano kit. The wood didn't even need to be cut." Each bungalow had three bedrooms, a kitchen, bathroom, lounge, dining room. They also had an inside toilet and central heating when they were built.

Mr Drywood said: "They are still practically as good as the day they were put up. The homes never get woodworm because cedarwood is quite oily, and because the homes are looked after."

"They are extremely warm in winter and cool in summer - that is the beauty of wood. The wood is entirely knot-free. The manufacturers were so sure of this that they offered a dollar for every knot found. We didn't find one."

He said the bungalows were considered to be temporary homes when first erected. "Then the council gave them a five-year licence. In 1924, they gave them a 15-year licence. They then decided that if they



George Drywood, of the Austin Village Preservation Society, outside his cedarwood bungalow at Longbridge, one of the 199 put up in 1917

were still standing they had to be permanent dwellings."

The new conservation status, which was backed by 129 of the 193 householders, means the bungalows can not be altered without planning permission. Edna Henson, 78,

said she would never swap her wooden house. "The bungalows are easy to look after. We just paint them once every five years."

"The outer walls take all the roof weight so the interior walls can be moved around.

Many people have converted their homes into two-bedroomed flats and extended the lounge for that reason."

"I am really pleased about the new status. We don't want people spoiling the look of the village, because this is a

special area. And most people are keen to retain the bungalows' original identity."

A Victorian tin church which has become a much-loved landmark in the village of Thrupp, near Stroud, Gloucestershire, has been

saved from demolition. Planners have refused permission for a housing development that would have meant the end of the 108-year-old blue-painted prefabricated shack. The listed building was deconsecrated in the 1960s.



WE'VE ALWAYS ASKED YOU WHAT YOU WANT. WHY SHOULD WE CHANGE NOW?

Dear Members and Customers,

You may already know that the Building Society has announced plans for the transfer of Birmingham Midshires to be acquired by The Royal Bank of Scotland plc, one of the UK's premier financial services institutions. The plan involves Birmingham Midshires becoming a new division of The Royal Bank of Scotland's retail banking business.

Although it is expected that members will not be asked to vote on the plan until 1998, on behalf of your board, we wanted to inform you as early as possible of the details of the plan for your discussion and agreement to the terms of the transaction.

The terms on which the consideration would be distributed will be determined by the Birmingham Midshires board, having regard to the provisions of the building societies legislation, and the consideration is expected to be in the form of preference shares in The Royal Bank of Scotland plc and perhaps cash to certain members. However, no decision has yet been taken on the nature of the distribution scheme.

Serving Your Needs

Birmingham Midshires has won many national accolades for its commitment to customer care and last year won the Unilever/Management Today Service Excellence Award. The Society has always prided itself on listening to your feedback and reacting to your needs whenever we can. Over the years you - the members and customers - have often told the Society, through our regular surveys, that you want the Society to offer a wider range of products and services.

The Way Forward

Birmingham Midshires' board has recently undertaken a major strategic review of the Society's options in light of the increasing pace of change within the retail financial services industry. The board of Birmingham Midshires has concluded that it can best maximise the Society's potential and develop the business to add long-term value for members, customers and staff as part of The Royal Bank of Scotland. Birmingham Midshires' board is unanimous that the terms of the proposed transfer are fair and reasonable and in the best interests of all Birmingham Midshires' key stakeholders - members, customers and staff.

The board of Birmingham Midshires believes that joining The Royal Bank of Scotland will allow the business to fill strategic gaps in the products and distribution channels it can offer, enabling it to accelerate its strategy of becoming a broadly-based provider of personal financial products, adding those of The Royal Bank of Scotland group. The board of Birmingham Midshires also perceives new opportunities for the business by making its product range available through The Royal Bank of Scotland's branch network.

The board of Birmingham Midshires believes that the availability to the business of the greater capital resources of The Royal Bank of Scotland Group will improve the quality of its funding base and permit more rapid growth than would be the case if Birmingham Midshires remained an independent organisation. As part of The Royal Bank of Scotland, the Birmingham Midshires business would benefit from the greater freedom to achieve the optimal mix between wholesale

and retail lending and from the lower costs at which The Royal Bank of Scotland can raise debt finance.

Birmingham Midshires has long focused on providing very high levels of customer service. The board of Birmingham Midshires believes that becoming part of The Royal Bank of Scotland will enable the Birmingham Midshires business to improve customer satisfaction.

The Birmingham Midshires board wants to recognise separately the ownership rights of Birmingham Midshires' members. The acquisition will give members the opportunity to realise the value of their stake in the Society.

The board of Birmingham Midshires believes that a union with The Royal Bank of Scotland will create a vibrant business well positioned to exploit opportunities in the United Kingdom market for personal financial services. Birmingham Midshires expects its business to benefit from enhanced business performance, increased income and improved efficiency, leading to greater value for customers. This combination would allow Birmingham Midshires' business to join a strong and respected bank. Birmingham Midshires' board believes that the divisional structure will allow the business to meet its strategic objectives more effectively while maintaining its strong culture and values founded on excellent customer care, innovation and strength.

Next Steps

Obviously there is a great deal to accomplish in the coming months. We will be writing to all members and customers individually in the next few weeks with more information and the next steps you need to take.

In the meantime, Birmingham Midshires members are advised to avoid taking any action which could unduly affect their membership status. We are committed to keeping you fully informed of developments. However, due to legal constraints, Birmingham Midshires staff are unable to give any information or advice about these proposals. A members' Helpline has been established on Freephone 0800 068 1818 if you would like to know more.

We expect to be able to put our proposals to members in the first half of next year and, subject to approval and certain other conditions, including the contents of the Building Societies Commission and the Bank of England, the transaction is expected to be completed in the second half of 1998.

Thank you for your continued support of Birmingham Midshires and we look forward to expanding your expectations in the future.

Yours sincerely

John Leighfield
Chairman

Mike Jackson
Chief Executive

P.S. We're sorry. This is a very important and complex transaction. It is communicating it to you as it has not been possible to do so currently in full and friendly plain language.

Birmingham Midshires Building Society, PO Box 88, Poundford Business Park, Walsworth Road, Wolverhampton WV9 9SZ.



Birmingham Midshires
Building Society

"We'll exceed your expectations"

We'll be writing to all our members over the next few weeks with more details. Meanwhile, sit tight and wait for more exciting news. However, for more up to date information please call our members' Helpline on 0800 068 1818.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Briton is killed in Alps crash

A British teacher was killed and her husband and their teenage son injured when their car was crushed by a lorry in the French Alps.

Elizabeth McMahon, 50, of Bromington, Powys, died on Monday after the lorry slid onto a wet road near Vizille. Her husband Patrick, 52, was being treated for multiple fractures yesterday in a hospital in Grenoble, with their son Owen, who was not badly hurt. The couple's two grown-up children were not on the trip.

Drought payout

Six more water companies, Anglian, Essex and Suffolk, Mid Southern, Northumbrian, Severn Trent, and Thames, agreed to pay compensation to customers if supplies are cut during a drought.

Hanover appeal

Colin Martin, who is trying to raise the *Hanover*, an 18th-century ship that sank off Cornwall laden with gold, has won leave in the High Court to challenge a police decision that has halted the project.

Estate agent hurt

An estate agent suffered serious head injuries when a timber ceiling collapsed. Catherine Arthur, 25, was showing a couple around an apartment in a dockside complex in Cardiff Bay.

Father jailed

Brian Simcock, 39, of Wigan, who killed three pet rabbits with a hammer because his children would not look after them properly, was jailed for a month. He admitted causing unnecessary suffering.

Flying bear back

Arthur Brooker, 5, has his teddy back, five days after tying it to six helium balloons. The bear was found by a farmer 20 miles from Arthur's home near Bristol. His reward was some sweets.

Driver to sue after car gets the hump

By PAUL WILKINSON

A SOLICITOR is planning to sue the Highways Agency after the exhaust on his car was wrecked by a speed bump.

Tony Burton, 47, was forced to pay £160 for repairs to his Ford RS2000 after the scrape with the speed bump near his home in Denton, Manchester. He failed to get compensation from Tameside council or the Department of Transport and now intends to take the agency to court for causing an obstruction on the Queen's Highway.

Mr Burton received more than 120 letters from other motorists when he advertised for victims of car damage to come forward. He claims traffic-calming legislation is being interpreted too literally by local councils and is angering motorists, instead of calming them.

"Speed bumps are causing frustration to motorists all over Britain," he said. "Any car which has a relatively low suspension risks serious damage from a standard local authority speed bump, yet a four-wheel-drive vehicle can fly over one at 70mph."

He said that the powers given to local authorities by the Highways Department were being abused and he wanted to challenge them in the courts.

A spokesman for the Highways Agency said: "Speed bumps are the responsibility of the local authority and are only installed on residential roads, not on trunk roads. The whole idea is that they slow traffic down, but you do get cases where motorists go over them too fast and cause damage."

A spokesman for Tameside council said: "Where speed bumps are introduced it is normally in response to public pressure. We have 300 speed bumps on our waiting list, those installed in Tameside are in accordance with guidelines laid down by the Department of the Environment."

Frisbee takes the sting out of rays

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

KILLER whales have never been noted as tidy eaters. But playing frisbee with stingrays up to 6ft across sets a new standard in food-thriving.

The whales have been observed tossing the stingrays to and fro by Ingrid Visser, a research student at the University of Adelaide. She believes they do it to reposition the ray so they can eat it without being stung.

Ms Visser spent two years watching killer whales in the waters off northern New Zealand. She observed 19 whales, mostly male, pursue and eat 55 stingrays. On one occasion two whales ate 18 stingrays in a six-hour binge.

Normally one killer whale would dive to the seabed to find a ray and then signal the others, she told *New Scientist*. "The whale then surfaces with the ray still alive, flapping its mouth." Sometimes a

whale will flip a ray out of the water before tossing it around with at least one other whale, she says. The rays make strenuous efforts to escape. "They leap on to the beach or hide under rocks," she says, "or will try to hide between the pilings of a wharf."

John Ford, director of research and conservation at Vancouver Aquarium in Canada, said: "The killer whale never ceases to amaze." The animal is a very innovative eater. Vanessa Williams, of the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society in Bath, said: "Common sense would suggest that they're trying to position the stingrays so they can swallow them without being stung."

"It's also very likely that they are teaching their young the 'technique' of catching prey. It's just like a mother cat training her kittens."

New Beetle drives into controversy

Book dents image of 'people's car'

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

THE Volkswagen Beetle which came into life as Hitler's "people's car" before becoming an essential part of the postwar German landscape, is to make a comeback next year. About 50,000 Beetles have already ordered the new model although it will not be presented until the Detroit Motor Show in five months' time.

The car will keep its insect-like form, though it will be somewhat rounder and will resemble more closely the prototypes built by the team of Ferdinand Porsche in the 1930s rather than the workaday 1950s version. Naturally the car will be well advanced, with airbags, an economic 1.9-litre turbo diesel and a technical affinity to the new Golf. The new Beetle, says the company, "demonstrates the lifestyle of its future owners — unconventional, youthful and emotional".

The key to the success of the new car will be the American market which took the old Beetle to its heart. Various Hollywood films, including the forgettable *Herbie*, were made about the German car, which was regarded as somehow more lovable, and certainly more Californian, than the heavier products of Detroit's factories. But the Beetle's popularity in the US

might take a denting if more were known about its origins. A comprehensive historical study by Professor Hans Mommsen, entitled *The Volkswagen Factory and the Workers of the Third Reich*, showed, in devastating detail, how the company used slave labour in its campaign to meet Hitler's demand for a car within the financial reach of the broad masses.

Borrowing ideas from Henry Ford, the Germans constructed the factory city of Wolfsburg which lived and breathed Volkswagen. A nearby concentration camp provided a steady flow of slave labourers from Western and Eastern Europe.

Soviet labourers at the factory were given a daily ration of potatoes and turnips, 150 grammes of bread, a ladle of thin soup and a portion of margarine — better than concentration camp rations but inadequate for workers who began their shift at 6.30am and worked through until 6pm, especially as the short lunchbreak meant that many were never able to reach the front of the queue to receive their food.

The Mommsen book, though it came out last year, has yet to be translated into English and there is speculation that the company is less



Hitler inspects the original "people's car" in 1938 with the designer, Ferdinand Porsche, on his left; below, the new four-seat coupe due to go on sale next spring

than eager for the history to be published in the US next year to coincide with the launch of the new Beetle. Translation of the 1,057-page book will take some time.

This is a highly sensitive time for German companies as they move to the United States market. Daimler, which is anxious to sell its

small Mercedes to the Americans, has also been rather slow in translating a company-sponsored history of slave labour in the car works.

Degussa, the company which melted down Jewish gold, is becoming more active in the US and recently announced that it had engaged an independent historian to

examine its archives. The fear is of private lawsuits from wartime survivors, but above all about a loss of image. Volkswagen is thus keen to present the Beetle not so much as the descendant of the Nazi era "Strength through joy" campaign but rather as the answer to student dreams, much as it was in the 1960s.



French warplane hit by budget cut

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

DASSAULT Aviation's Rafale fighter-bomber will be the first casualty of the French Socialist Government's decision to cut its defence budget next year to offset spending on job creation while still meeting the 3 per cent Maastricht criteria for a single European currency.

The Government, Dassault's only customer for the Rafale, intends to scale back its £1.6 million order for 48 of the warplanes over the next five years, and may extend it over a longer period. An earlier order for 13 of the aircraft will stand.

A spokesman for the Defence Ministry said the "cutting back does not mean cutting out" — an indication that the Government probably intends to maintain at least the naval version of the warplane, the only French fighter-bomber available to equip the *Charles de Gaulle*, France's new aircraft carrier.

The Rafale, which has now reached the production stage, is France's independent equivalent of the Eurofighter being manufactured by a British and German-led consortium.

France's large defence budget was a natural target for cuts. However, the Government was hindered by the phasing out of conscription in favour of a professional volunteer army, leaving a reduction in military procurement as its only option.

Rome and Athens trade insults on Games venue

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

IN A latter-day reflection of the struggle for domination of the ancient world, Athens and Rome yesterday each tried to prove that the other was an unsuitable venue for the Olympic Games in 2004. "Rome and Athens trade insults" was the front-page headline in *La Repubblica*.

The row, which began with an outspoken attack on Athens' qualifications by Primo Nebiolo, the noted Italian sports official, lawyer and former athlete, is seen as a sign of the increasingly heated atmosphere as the International Olympic Committee (IOC) prepares to make its final decision on the 2004 Games on September 5.

Rome and Athens are neck and neck in the last lap, with Cape Town and Buenos Aires also on the short list. Stockholm is the fifth remaining contender, but its chances are thought to have received a setback when an explosion destroyed part of the Stockholm Olympic stadium at the end of last week.

Signor Nebiolo, who heads the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) and is also on the IOC, raised Greek hackles by making scathing remarks about Athens' handling of the world athletics championship which ended in Greece last Sunday. The event was widely seen as a test of Greece's ability to stage

the Olympic Games in seven years' time. The Games, revived in 1896, had their origins in ancient Greece 30 centuries ago, and Athens was bitterly disappointed not to be chosen to host the centenary Games in 1996, which went to Atlanta.

Signor Nebiolo, a former Italian athletics champion known for his sharp tongue and dominant personality, told Greek television after attending the athletics championship that Greek organisation had been "mediocre" at best. Any success was largely due to the IAAF rather than the hosts, he said. Signor Nebiolo said many of the events had been poorly attended and overpriced, with near-empty stadiums. "I suppose the people of Athens all head-



Nebiolo: attack on Greece's stability

ed for the seaside instead," he said. "But you Greeks have the sea all year round. Surely you can forget the sea for a week."

In an even sharper dig at Greek pride, he said Greece was burdened by political and economic problems over meeting the Maastricht criteria for the European single currency and had high unemployment and an unstable currency.

Theodoros Pangalos, the Greek Foreign Minister — also known for his outspoken manner and Mediterranean temperament — retorted that Signor Nebiolo had broken "a very basic rule: that although politicians are allowed to speak about sport, sports officials are not allowed to speak about politics".

Italy, Mr Pangalos pointed out, had had to mobilise its armed forces to try to suppress the "terrifying problem" of the Mafia, a reference to the use of troops to patrol both Palermo and Naples.

"But I would not dream of saying that the Mafia characterises Italy, and that Rome therefore does not deserve the Games," he said. "If Rome does not win, it will simply be because Athens was better."

A country such as Italy which had 55 governments since the Second World War was in no position to accuse Greece of instability, he added.

French love of l'amour is wilting

BY SUSAN BELL

THE popular myth of the Latin lover's legendary libido has been shattered. A survey claims that 52 per cent of French people would be unconcerned by long spells of chastity, while 49 per cent said they often — or sometimes — had no desire to make love.

The indifference to all things sexual was compounded by figures showing that 44 per cent of men surveyed admitted to a flagging sex drive.

French women fared even worse, with 53 per cent saying their libido had decreased. Thirty eight per cent of those polled said they were making love less than they used to.

Men seemed more aware of the problem than women, and long lapses in sexual activity were also a greater concern for males. Only 9 per cent said they were having more sex than they used to.

The survey, to be published today in the weekly news magazine *L'Evenement du Jeudi*, was conducted with 960 people aged 18 or over. It does not explain the apparent cooling ardour — nor does the birth rate, which has increased by 23,000 in two years.

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Sombre India in no mood to celebrate

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS
IN DELHI



6 The 120 million Indian Muslims are silent as always — the people left behind

AT midnight tonight India will mark 50 years of freedom, bowing its head in sorrow rather than raising it in celebration. A gloom hangs over Delhi and although the nation is taking a four-day holiday, this is the main sign that anything is happening.

There will be unspectacular parades and a flurry of midnight speeches, none of which will touch the eloquence of Jawaharlal Nehru's "tryst with destiny" speech, India's City of Destiny Address, defining the soul of a nation, his remarks filled with anguish because freedom brought with it the tragedy of partition.

That same sense of sadness hangs over India like the monsoon clouds. Nobody feels like a party. If anybody in the subcontinent should celebrate it is Pakistan, for whom partition was a victory, severing half of India's Muslims from the other half with a line drawn on a map at the rate of 30 miles a day by a man who had never been to India. He dismembered a country with 5,000 years of history, separating friends and making them enemies in three years.

But not even Pakistan feels glad, the subcontinent believes it has squandered too many dreams. As midnight nears, the 120 million Muslims of India, almost as many as on the other side, are silent as

always, a vulnerable group — the people left behind.

Few would choose to go there now; their leaders, such as this fissiparous community has any, reassure them that they are better off in secular India, for all the prejudices they endure and the massacres they have suffered at the hands of Hindu fanatics. Pakistan holds no allure for Indian Muslims any more; the Islamic homeland is a failure.

Senior veterans still travel from Pakistan to India for reunions at their former military academies in Dehra Dun and beyond, enabling them to meet friends they grew up with, trained with, and fought against in war. They embrace without rancour the last gen-

eration of Indians and Pakistanis who know each other. South Asia does not have cross-border enmities as Europe has them.

The wars were short-lived border battles, not enough to poison people against each other. Beyond the political divide there survives a sense of fraternity and shared experience, at least between Hindu and Muslim, even among the post-partition generations.

Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the jurist whose pen divided the subcontinent, sweated for 30 days through the pre-monsoon humidity in a bungalow in the grounds of the Viceroy's palace. "Down comes the Union Jack on Friday morning and up goes — for the moment I rather forget what, but it has a spinning wheel or a spider's web in the middle. Nobody in India will love me," he wrote.

That wheel was Ashoka's wheel — the *dharma chakra*, wheel of the cosmic order, emblazoned on the shields and chariots of the founder of the Hindu empire. Mahatma Gandhi's loyalists wanted his spinning wheel to occupy the flag instead, but it was rejected as a symbol of backwardness. "I refuse to salute a flag which carries such a message," he said of India's new flag, an emblem of war at the centre.

Britain dabbled in India for more than three centuries, but the blueprint for dividing the subcontinent was completed in four hours and accepted by the Cabinet in five minutes. "The responsibility for this mad decision," wrote Mountbatten, the last Viceroy, should be placed "squarely on Indian shoulders in the eyes of the world, for one day they will bitterly regret the decision they are about to make".

Flag offence: A school principal in western India has been jailed for a year and fined about £10 for disrespecting the flag. Manishankar Narayan Rawale, 56, hoisted the flag at his school near Nagpur in January to mark Republic Day, but failed to lower it in the evening, a violation of the flag code. (AFP)



Nehru with Lady Mountbatten on independence day when he made his speech on India's "tryst with destiny"

Pakistan votes to shoot terrorists on sight

Islamabad: Pakistan's National Assembly (lower house) passed an anti-terrorism Bill yesterday which gives the Government sweeping new security powers, including the right for police to shoot suspects on sight.

The opposition Pakistan People's Party, led by Benazir Bhutto, walked out of the Assembly in protest.

The Bill is an attempt to stop a wave of killings that have shaken Pakistan in the run-up to the celebration of 50 years of independence.

More than 225 people have been killed this year in a feud involving rival wings of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (United National Movement), an ethnic party in Karachi, while a vendetta between militant Sunni and Shia Muslim factions has cost about 140 lives.

The Bill, sure to become law thanks to the large majority enjoyed by Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister, in the Senate and the National Assembly, would let the federal or provincial governments call in the armed forces to help civilian authori-

ties. It authorises policemen or soldiers to fire on anyone committing, or believed to be about to commit, a "terrorist" offence.

The security forces would also be allowed to arrest terrorist suspects without a warrant and to search premises, and seize weapons or anything else likely to be used in a terrorist offence, also without a warrant. The Bill proposes the death penalty for any terrorist whose action has resulted in a death, and a sentence of between seven years and life imprisonment otherwise. (Reuters)

Political leaders squabble for the spotlight

FROM ZAHID HUSSAIN
IN ISLAMABAD

PAKISTAN will celebrate the anniversary of its creation in an appropriate manner. A row between President Leghari and Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister, has led to the cancellation of a joint session of parliament today.

Traditionally the joint session is addressed by the President, but the Prime Minister wanted to be at centre stage on this occasion. As the President would not give up his prerogative, the Government cancelled the session. Now Mr Sharif will make an address on national television and radio at midnight.

Benazir Bhutto, the Opposition leader, who is on a private visit to London, will not attend the official ceremony and there appears little enthusiasm among ordinary Pakistanis. The mood is one of disillusionment. An opinion poll by the country's largest-circulation newspaper *Jang* showed that 90 per cent of Pakistanis do not have any faith in their leaders.

Pakistan today is one of the poorest of nations with one of the highest illiteracy rates. For more than half its 50 years of independence it has been ruled by military dictatorship. The country is back on a democratic track but the roots of democracy are shallow.

Created in the name of religion, Pakistan is faced with a sectarian war which is tearing the country apart. The sectarian violence on the streets of Karachi and Punjab province is symptomatic of a deep-rooted and serious malaise. This week the federal government sent forces to control the violence.

The experience of the past nine years, since the return of democracy, has been that political leaders lack vision and courage. Successive elected governments have further weakened national institutions. The most important question at the moment is what lies ahead for Pakistan. The country stands at a crossroads and on the brink of social disaster.

Leading article, page 19



Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy, left, and Sir Cyril Radcliffe, who divided the subcontinent

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BUSINESS EDITOR: Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY AUGUST 14 1997

Jobless total at 17-year low

BY ADAM JONES
UNEMPLOYMENT fell to its lowest level in 17 years in July, with fewer students thought to be joining the dole queue after leaving education. The City, fearing more inflationary signs, was measured by accompanying data showing the underlying annual increase in national earnings to be static in June at 4.25 per cent.

olds who have been out of work for more than six months, as well as all those unemployed for more than two years, will be eased into work through temporarily subsidised jobs, voluntary work or study. In the second quarter of 1997, the number needing these incentives fell by 67,300 to 457,700. July is traditionally a time when the ranks of the jobless are swelled by students leaving education. Last month, the flow was significantly lower than July 1996.

Baroness Blackstone, the Education and Employment Minister, said this confirmed anecdotal evidence that young people are finding it easier to get jobs. The Office for National Statistics, which compiles the unemployment figures, also pointed out that July 1997 was the first time students had come across the jobseeker's allowance, which requires claimants to meet more demanding tests to prove they are looking for a job. The statistics are presented on the same basis as the previous Government's unemployment figures. It is thought that the Government will soon make a decision on the future basis for calculation. The seasonally adjusted number of vacancies advertised at jobcentres rose by 1,500 in July to 284,400, the highest since measurements began in 1980. The ONS, however, said this includes a 40,000 error that exaggerates the total.

Bank says rate rises on hold

BY ANATOLE KALETSKY
THE Bank of England confirmed yesterday that interest rates are unlikely to change in the next few months, after four consecutive quarter-point rises since the Bank was given control of UK monetary policy. The Bank said in its quarterly Inflation Report that the next move in interest rates was more likely to be up than down. The minutes of July's MPC meeting, also published yesterday, showed that all members of the committee agreed on a quarter-point increase, and Mr King suggested that the latest MPC meeting, the minutes of which will be published in September, was unanimous as well.

Mr King said that future monetary decisions would be swayed by new evidence on five areas of uncertainty: European monetary union and its effect on sterling; the impact of the strong pound on trade and output; the evidence of inflationary pressure or lack of it in the labour market; the impact of building society windfalls on consumption and the developments in money supply figures. The Inflation Report said the strength of sterling caused an "acute dilemma" for monetary policy at present. The "large rise" in sterling's exchange rate was now leading to "severe pressure" on manufacturers and other businesses exposed to international competition.

The Inflation Report said the strength of sterling caused an "acute dilemma" for monetary policy at present. The "large rise" in sterling's exchange rate was now leading to "severe pressure" on manufacturers and other businesses exposed to international competition.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES		
FTSE 100	5003.6	(-72.2)
Yield	3.34%	
FTSE All share	2348.96	(-27.43)
Nikkei	19088.80	(-50.51)
New York		
Dow Jones	7842.72	(-18.12)
S&P Composite	923.88	(-2.85)
US RATE		
Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(5 1/8%)
Long Bond	96 1/8%	(97 1/8%)
Yield	6.89%	(6.98%)
LONDON MONEY		
3-mth Interbank	7 1/4%	(7 1/4%)
Libor long gth	114 1/2%	(114 1/2%)
Future (Sep)		
STERLING		
New York	1.5808*	(1.5790)
London		
\$	1.5803	(1.5785)
DM	2.8944	(2.8934)
FF	9.7589	(9.9101)
Sfr	2.3835	(2.4075)
Yen	182.52	(183.00)
\$ Index	100.7	(101.7)
DOLLAR		
London		
DM	1.8345*	(1.8330)
FF	6.1850*	(6.2770)
Sfr	1.5100*	(1.5258)
Yen	115.70*	(116.28)
\$ Index	105.5	(105.2)
Tokyo close Yen	115.45	
NORTH SEA OIL		
Brent 15-day (Oct)	\$19.90	(\$18.95)
GOLD		
London close	\$277.95	(\$275.95)

* denotes midday trading price

Midshires to pay windfall of £600

BY ROBERT MILLER, BANKING CORRESPONDENT

ABOUT 12 million customers of the Birmingham Midshires Building Society will receive windfall bonuses worth an average of between £600 and £650 each after the agreed £630 million bid by Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS). The takeover, which should be completed by the second half of next year, was agreed after nine months of talks. RBS has clinched a deal that will double the size of its mortgage book to £12 billion and boost the Scottish bank's branch outlets by 115 to 775. When the purchase is completed RBS will become the UK's tenth-largest mortgage lender.

George Mathewson, group chief executive of RBS, which also owns Direct Line, the telephone insurer, gave a clear indication that the Birmingham Midshires deal would not be the last acquisition. He said: "This does not rule out a much larger acquisition in the future. But any deal has to be at the right price and give value to both partners." The proposed deal values the building society at between £605 million and £630 million. The final figure will be decided by a pre-agreed formula that will be activated only after RBS's advisers have completed a due diligence review of the Birmingham Midshires books. RBS, which was advised by JP Morgan, when Mike Jackson became chief executive of the building society in 1990 its finances were parlous and its loan book was considered to be in such a state that a rescue bid by a stronger society was a serious possibility. Since then pre-tax profits have risen from £9.5 million to £70.7 million.



George Mathewson, left, and Mike Jackson are creating Britain's tenth-largest mortgage lender through the deal

Yorkshire Water rejects £10 plan

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

YORKSHIRE WATER has run into fresh controversy for not joining a drought compensation scheme designed to prevent the poor service it was criticised for two years ago. Two thirds of the industry have agreed to have their licences amended by the regulator so that they must pay out £10 a day if drought interrupts water supplies. But Yorkshire said it does not think licence changes should be authorised by anything but statute. A spokesman for Ofwat said: "The whole idea of this scheme was to avoid the situation that Yorkshire will not join." The scheme was drafted last year to strengthen the financial incentives for water companies to provide adequate service following Yorkshire's drought crisis in 1995. The refusal by Yorkshire, Southern and seven smaller companies, to endorse licence changes means that their customers will have no automatic right for compensation. Drought is not covered under existing guaranteed standards so claims could be lengthy and possibly fruitless. Last year Yorkshire was fined £42 million by Ian Byatt, the water regulator, for poor performance in 1995.

Travel feels benefit of windfalls

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SPENDING of windfalls is beginning to take off in the travel industry, with Airlines yesterday reporting strong early bookings for next year's holidays. Winter bookings are 25 per cent ahead of last year, while the early launch of summer 1998 brochures has led to a 42 per cent rise. Windfall payments from demutualising building societies and the Norwich Union have put up to £30 billion into circulation in recent months. Cuts in the number of holidays available for this summer, after the industry's disastrous summer of 1995, have paid off for Airlines. Pre-tax profit has risen 24 per cent to £24.1 million in the three months to June 30.

Actuaries press for urgent review of pension schemes

BY CAROLINE MERRELL

A LEADING group of pension fund advisers has called for an urgent review of all UK pension schemes after tax changes announced in the Budget. The Institute of Actuaries says it is now nearly impossible to advise on pensions as the changes affect whether individuals should remain in the state earnings related pension or contract out. The institute examined the effects of the Budget ban on pension funds claiming back the 20 per cent advance corporation tax (ACT) paid on company dividends. Nigel Masters, chairman of the ACT working party, said: "The change could mean that some people should never be contracted out of Serps." The institute said that actuaries who look after more than £500 billion of pension assets should immediately review the value, solvency and liabilities of all pension schemes. Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, prompted protests over the ACT change. The institute said that the move could cost as much as £75 billion. The costs will be incurred because the valuations of many of the country's biggest pension schemes have been cut. Future revenue from company dividends will also be substantially less. According to the actuaries, as much as 15 per cent has been knocked off the value of schemes and investment returns have been cut by 0.5 per cent a year for the average pension scheme. Companies will have to make substantial cash injections into their schemes to ensure that liabilities can be met. Earlier this week, Glynwed said it would have to invest an extra £3 million to top up its pension fund. Compensation arrangements for those mis-sold a personal pension will also need to be reviewed. Already some, such as the Prudential, are increasing the amount set aside to resolve the matter. Duncan Ferguson, Institute of Actuaries president, said: "The profession must act prudently now to protect the public's pension, savings and insurance investments." The actuaries also want the Government to review the minimum funding requirement (MFR) for pension schemes. The MFR affects the value of transfers from company schemes.

Warburg recovery boosts Swiss Bank

BY ROBERT MILLER

SBC WARBURG, the London investment bank that was on its knees two years ago, has become the biggest contributor to the profits of Swiss Bank Corporation, overtaking the traditional private banking business for the first time. Profits from investment banking at SBC, which earned handsome bonuses for successful traders and executives, also outstripped those of asset management through SBC Brinson and retail banking. The domestic bank portfolio, however, was particularly hard hit by

the devaluation of the Swiss franc and Switzerland's ongoing recession. SBC Warburg has reassessed itself as a powerful player in the London markets, scoring notable successes including the defence of the Co-operative Wholesale Society from a bid led by Andrew Regan. SBC's overall group profit jumped 84 per cent to £564 million of which SBC Warburg's contribution rose 60 per cent to £287 million. The £297 million rise in personnel expenses to more than £1 billion was partly because of the currency effect but mainly a result

of "higher performance-related compensation on the back of the strong results", SBC said. The banking group's return on equity rose to 19.4 per cent in the first half of the year compared with 10.5 per cent in the same period last year. City analysts said the SBC Warburg figures were a vindication of SBC's strategy of carving out a place in the investment banking world. They compared the Swiss bank's figures with those of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell (DMG), the investment banking arm of Deutsche Bank, announced last

month. DMG, which yesterday completed a \$1.5 billion (£950 million) floating rate note transaction for ICI, the largest such deal, reported profits of £288 million despite the problems in its fund management business. George Blum, SBC chairman, warned the market and shareholders, who include Martin Ebner, the maverick Swiss corporate financier who has a 2 per cent stake, that results in the second half would not equal those in the first, "especially if financial markets fail to sustain their current high levels and transaction volumes fall".

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TM 14/05/97

Economic miracles take longer



COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

Hard luck, carpetbaggers, if you failed to spot the attractions of the Birmingham Midshires building society. Our Weekend Money section highlighted its attractions to an expansionist bank, and fortune-hunting investors, back in October 1995.

If George Mathewson had pounced then, the price would certainly have been lower, but windfall collectors will appreciate the benefits of his delay. No doubt they will soon be dashing off to the travel agents to book an extra holiday or to the high street to splash out on a carpet or computer.

But this latest fuel to consumer spending is not likely to budge the Bank of England from its view that inflation is under control. Its confidence on that front was spelt out yesterday, and appears to have convinced the markets that interest rates really are on hold.

The phantasmagorical pound will be greeted as great news for exporters, even if it is unfortunate for those carpetbaggers who choose to take a break overseas. So why should the stock market plunge so dramatically? Its performance is only explicable as a reaction by overseas investors to sterling's fall, a decision that they may not want to be so heavily weighted in the UK economy.

Yet the underlying news on the economy continues to tell a tale of strength, and not just on the

inflation front. For unemployment figures to have fallen to their lowest since 1990, without any increase in average earnings is an impressive achievement. Optimists would have us believe that we have entered a new economic era. However, there are many who are wary of miracles.

They will be taking note of the strike threat now being issued at Barclays. Martin Taylor has already shaken up the staffing in the bank, but he has much further to go.

The battle that Bob Ayling is having to fight at British Airways is not unique to airlines. Industry is moving into a new era of global competitiveness in which the speed of change in working practices is having to move up several gears.

Technology makes that possible, but some employees will inevitably not enjoy the demands that come with it. It is one area in which journalists speak from experience, since our own industry was the advance guard for developments that are only now taking place in the wider world. Persuading staff to adopt new, flexible work practices is not easy, as Bob Ayling can testify.

And while the City has seen that average wages have not been rising, so have workers in local authorities and hospitals. We can expect to see some struggles ahead as the tighter employment market does encourage a degree of bravery in wage demands.

Economic Nirvana is not yet assured, and is unlikely to be achieved without a fight. The stock market will be right if it reflects that.

Banking on bancassurance

George Mathewson's latest move gives Royal Bank of Scotland the extra high street distribution it has been seeking ever since it failed to land the Cheltenham & Gloucester, beaten by the wily team of Sir Brian Pitman and Peter Ellwood at Lloyds.

The price is a full one, since the

Birmingham & Midshires has seen little organic growth in the last three years. Instead, it has swelled its loan book with a prolonged spree of purchasers, some of which may have brought it loans of questionable quality.

But the B&M also brings a core client base of the more moneyed sections of Midlands society, which is what Mr Mathewson wants as a target for other Royal Bank products.

The purchase will bring around one million extra clients into his list and he will waste no time in telling them just what Royal Bank has to offer.

Like his rivals, he wants to persuade customers to drop into a one-stop financial shop, whether they do it in person or by phone. At Lloyds TSB, Peter Ellwood reckons that his average customer has a total of six financial products, just two of them purchased from him. If he can persuade customers to be less promiscuous and pick up

maybe four from Lloyds, the effect on his profits would be formidable. The race is on to learn as much as possible about customers, their family background and possible financial requirements so that subtle selling will have them snapping up a new insurance policy almost before they realised they needed it.

He and Mathewson are not the only bankers to have worked this out, but they are well placed to make the idea of the bancassurance work.

Mr Mathewson has the advantage of owning Direct Line, a formidable operation that pioneered the art of telephone selling of insurance and transformed an industry. In the process, it made a fortune for Peter Wood. Mr Mathewson has never resented the rewards that Mr Wood made from his bright idea, nurtured under the Royal Bank umbrella. Instead, he has pointed out that few other bank-

ers would have been brave enough to back such a forceful individual.

This will put him in a good position to nurture the undoubted talents of Michael Jackson, the B&M chief executive who has done a splendid job of rescuing the society from near oblivion but whose reputation is not of the shrinking violet variety.

Will names choose shares over status?

So successful has been the rescue of Lloyd's of London that it is easy to forget just how close to collapse that City institution came. But insiders admit that, had just one United States judge been fool enough to rule in favour of litigious Americans who tried to block the crucial reconstruction, he would have been administering the fatal injection.

Yet despite that brush with death, the Lloyd's name has emerged virtually unscathed with customers. And, although they have seen gory evidence of the fact that underwriting can result in losses as well as profits, 10,000 individuals have opted to remain as Lloyd's names. What

motivates them to continue risking the demonstrated dangers of unlimited liability is unclear, but given an average age heading towards the pensionable, an element of habit may be partly responsible. Greedy optimism and snobbery may also come into the equation.

But a recent suggestion to names that they change the status of their involvement with Lloyd's attracted 1,400 requests for more information. This is not the first proposal for names to convert their involvement into a corporate scheme but it is the first that offers the attraction of a quoted investment.

The Conversion Investment Trust is the bright idea of Dawnay Day. It will be intriguing to see how many names are won over by the prospect of a chance to swap status for shares, and the option to quit Lloyd's when the time, or price, is right.

Britain's loss

WHEN Warburgs was sold to Swiss Bank Corporation the perceived wisdom in the City was that it would suffer. Clients and senior bankers flooded out the door. But the knee-jerk reaction was wrong. Sure, the SBC culture was much more brash, but marrying the superb O'Connor derivatives business to some pretty smart brains has created a world-class investment bank for London. Shame it isn't British any more.

BICC looks to sale of German loss-maker

By PAUL DURMAN

BICC, the cables group that owns the Balfour Beatty construction company, is believed to be looking at a sale of its loss-making German business, one of the key problems behind yesterday's disappointing results.

The group, whose shares have underperformed the market by 70 per cent in recent years, has already cut more than 1,300 staff from KWO Kabel, reducing it to what it believes is the minimum effective size of 700 employees. But these measures have not proved sufficient to escape a fall in German cable prices to 15 per cent below the US level BICC regards as the norm.

Alan Jones, chief executive, said that BICC was looking to reduce the group's exposure to Germany but would not discuss the possibility of a sale of all or part of the business. "We are obviously thinking hard about it (KWO)," he said.

KWO faces strong competition from Alcatel and Siemens, but Mr Jones believes that the German market has a "reasonable chance of stabilising" because of other efforts to reduce the oversupply of cable. BICC reported half-year

pre-tax profits down from £63 million to £55 million. Operating profits from BICC Cables, the European arm, fell from £51 million to £28 million. This understates the true extent of the deterioration in trading because the group has cut £40 million from its annual costs since last year.

The group's Italian business swung into heavy losses after Enel, the state-owned energy group, stopped buying cable in the run-up to privatisation. Mr Jones said this caused Italian sales of power cables to halve. BICC has agreed with the Italian Government to shed another 350 of its 1,220 staff.

Metal Manufacturers, the Australian cabling business, also disappointed with profits falling from £20 million to £14 million. BICC blamed weak construction and housing markets and a slowdown in telecommunications orders.

BICC's shares fell 7½p to 162½p, continuing their three-and-a-half year slide. Richard Dunne, of the broker Henderson Crosthwaite, said: "Management credibility must be low. Shareholders who backed last year's rights issue must be rueful that they ever partook." BICC raised £170 million by issuing shares at 270p.

Mr Dunne added that BICC had previously said it had virtually completed the restructuring programme begun when Mr Jones joined in April 1995. He said there are also doubts about BICC's dividend, although the company maintained the interim payment at 4p a share. It will be paid on January 2.

Balfour Beatty, which accounts for almost half the group's six-month turnover of £2.2 billion, increased its profits from £1m to £15 million, mainly due to elimination of prior-year losses.

Much of the profit came from its rail maintenance and renewal business. Mr Jones said Balfour Beatty was still less than half way towards achieving 3 per cent margins on its UK business.

Tempus, page 26



Alan Jones, left, chief executive, and Ron Henderson, finance director of BICC, where half-year profits fell £8 million

Energy takes £112m hit on windfall tax

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE ENERGY GROUP, the Anglo-US power company whose £3.7 billion takeover by PacificCorp was sent to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, took a £112 million charge from the windfall tax for its subsidiary Eastern Electricity.

The group, which also comprises the US's largest coal business Peabody, detailed the bill in its figures for the three months to June 30. It also recorded a dip in operating profits. The profits slipped 2 per cent to £96 million because

of £20 million seasonal losses at its coal-fired power stations. The Energy Group bought the mid merit stations from National Power and PowerGen last summer. Mid merit means that they are not always called to operate at full capacity when demand is low.

The company has to wait until the end of November to hear whether the agreed bid from PacificCorp, which has now lapsed, will be allowed to proceed. The Energy Group spent £7 million on advisers' fees for the bid.

Ockham postpones Wise Speke float

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

OCKHAM HOLDINGS, the Lloyd's of London underwriter, has put on hold its plans to float Wise Speke, its stock-broking subsidiary, in order to build up the company.

Ockham pulled the floatation at the last minute in December amid stock market volatility. This would have given it a market capitalisation of around £13 million. Yesterday Lord Poole, Ockham chief executive, said the broker needed to be substantially bigger to have a successful entry on the stock market. He

ruled out acquisitions in the short term.

Wise Speke made £1.5 million pre-tax profit to June 30, above last year's £1.5 million which included £0.5 million from Dealwise, the execution-only business later sold.

A fall in interim pre-tax profits for Ockham from £11.4 million to £7.4 million belied the £5.5 million capital injection under the Equitas settlement last year. In real terms they rose £1.5 million.

An interim dividend of 1.5p (1p) is due on November 11.

Dispute erupts over Cellnet billing contract

By ERIC REGULY

A SIMMERING contract dispute between Cellnet and AMS Management, an American information technology firm, erupted yesterday when AMS said it would cease working on a new billing system that was supposed to meet the mobile phone company's needs through the next decade.

Cellnet said AMS's billing system is a year behind schedule, "has hundreds of software bugs and does not produce bills". The company, which is owned 60 per cent by British Telecom and 40 per cent by Securicor, is to take a £40 million charge this year to cover the faulty system on top of the £25 million charge it took last year.

Cellnet said it has given AMS, based in Virginia, 30 days to either fix the software or present a plan on how it intends to fix it within a certain period. It is not ruling out legal action if neither condition is met. The company said: "Cellnet has given notice to AMS stating that it considers AMS in material breach of contract."

But AMS has no intention of doing any more work on the so-called Force billing system. It said it had been unable to reach agreement on the final aspects of the contract in spite of more than seven months of negotiations "and believes it has fulfilled all of its contractual obligations to Cellnet".

Charles Rossotti, chairman of AMS, said: "We firmly believe that we have gone far beyond what was reasonably expected. Virtually every week, Cellnet changed what it wanted."

The withdrawal of AMS is the latest in a series of blows to Cellnet, the second-largest player in the industry.

In March, Howard Ford, the managing director who

was ultimately responsible for the AMS contract, left abruptly amid rumours that the billing system was proving a failure. Shortly afterwards, Cellnet revealed that it recruited only 12,000 customers in the first three months of the year, far below the levels announced by even its smallest rivals.

Cellnet said it would upgrade its old billing system if AMS failed to provide an acceptable solution.

Increase in hotel bookings lifts M&C

By ADAM JONES

MILLENNIUM & COPTHORNE Hotels (M&C) said pessimism over the central London hotel market was misguided as it announced strong growth yesterday. Pre-tax profits were boosted 53 per cent in the first half of the year, after a surge in occupancy and room rates.

The group, floated last year and controlled by Kwok Leng Beng, the Singaporean billionaire, was optimistic about its traditionally stronger second half, saying July showed good growth on 1996.

The rise in profits, and the associated 34 per cent increase in turnover to £95.3 million, is distorted by the fact that the group was floated only last spring. On an adjusted basis, profits were up 33 per cent and turnover 13 per cent. Occupancy rates in London rose from 78.9 to 82.5 per cent. Average room rates rose from £69.53 to £79.33.

From next month, the Gloucester, Bailey's Chelsea and Britannia hotels in London will be rebranded as Millennium hotels in an attempt to actively market the brand as a four-star presence in big cities.

An interim dividend of 2.8p per share, an increase from 0.7p, will be paid.

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Drugs certainties go up in smoke



GRAHAM SEARJEANT

More Britons now smoke cigarettes than in 1994, according to one of the more surprising surveys that see daylight at this time of year. After quitting 25,000 people, Mintel, a prominent market research group, projects that there are now 13 million users, up 2.5 per cent. Numbers had shrunk over two decades, at up to 500,000 a year.

Such projections can be misleading, even on a big sample, but something embarrassing seems to be happening. It is not that more youngsters are taking up cigarettes. Fewer than usual in the 35-44 age group are giving them up, especially among women and in groups that marketing folk categorise as affluent.

One trendy explanation might be that, after much vilification, smokers have become a self-identifying minority group with their own culture. That would make them worth catering for: after the pink puff the finger-stained pound, even sub-ordinator might attract marketing strategists, those of us who smoke

pipes being perhaps a key target audience for disposable paper carrier slippers or burial plans. Such a trend is already evident in America but not yet here, except among would-be sophisticates.

An alternative explanation is that more middle-class, middle-aged people face routine stress, especially women working their way up in a hostile world. Nicotine is believed by many smokers to offer short-term relief from stress, as well as aiding concentration.

In spite of all the successful campaigning, more people seem prepared to live with a proven, major long-term health hazard because they want short-term relief from stress. The natural reaction from health campaigners, who count the huge cost, was that efforts must be redoubled, both to prevent young people taking up the habit and to badge existing smokers to break their addiction.

If stress is increasing, however, the demand for all sorts of supposedly relaxing, energising or mind-altering drugs is also likely to rise. No "statistics" about unrecorded crime are credible. But it is safe to say that trade in illegal drugs has become so widespread that it is now the key cause of much street crime, robbery and burglary as well as gangland crime.

To fulfil its pledge to be tough both on crime and the causes of crime, the Government is bound to treat the illegal drugs trade as a high priority. Predictably, three months after taking office, it has been faced with renewed demands for a Royal Commission on illegal drugs to think the politically unthinkable for it. There is, at least, much to be said for talking the politically unthinkable. Do not assume, however, that a commission would opt to legalise cannabis and amphetamines, which ac-

counted for 90 per cent of drug seizures last year, or "ecstasy", claimed to be teenagers' favoured, disaster-prone recreational drug. Governments of right or left will always have tensions between puritan attitudes, now so evident in the treatment of tobacco and alcohol, and libertarian views sympathetic to "decriminalising" the less lethal banned drugs. They

usually just fight each other to a standstill. Puritans insist on ever stiffer laws. Libertarians ensure that they cannot be enforced effectively.

An economic approach might break the deadlock. Taxes have certainly helped to cut tobacco sales among under-aged school-children and families with big mortgages. But the impact is limited. Demand for tobacco and alcohol is insensitive to price. That makes tax a great revenue-earner (about £9 billion a year from tobacco alone) but a poor deterrent. And national governments in the European Union no longer have so strong a monopoly on taxes. High-value items can be moved easily and often legally across borders. But there is hope. The success of unleaded petrol shows that differential tax rates on similar products can make a powerful impact on demand.

Illegal drugs generate crime because prices are too high for most users to afford and because high profits generate physical competition to defend supply monopolies. For legalisation to cut crime, it would have to slash prices heavily. Over that range, price would certainly affect demand and some people who eschew drugs because of the law would also buy.

Use of legalised drugs would rise strongly. Such drugs are banned because they are reckoned to be dangerous to health or as dangerous to society as opium proved in China. In America, two states have tried to avoid this dilemma. After a campaign bankrolled by George Soros, a hedge fund manager, they have passed laws allowing cannabis, and in one case other drugs, to be prescribed for "medical purposes", like the downy-ginger's brandy.

Many harmful drugs, such as tobacco and alcohol, also have medicinal benefits. But that fools no one. These are attempts to cut prices while maintaining control. As such they are interesting experiments but will still probably raise consumption. Before acting, governments should investigate the relative dangers of drugs, their different forms and chemical substitutes. Once that is done, taxes could be changed to create big differentials between more and less dangerous forms of legal drugs such as tobacco. If some illegal drugs were found to be safer than alcohol and tobacco, or no more dangerous overall, competitive production might be allowed, even if distribution is controlled.

Only a few inconvenient things are clear. Society is unlikely to become less stressful. In the absence of religion, many adolescents and insecure folk of all ages will want some form of drug to help them cope. All such drugs will to some degree be dangerous. And even in this fraught byway, it is fatal to ignore market forces.

The self-help sisterhood ready to invite Britons into its embrace

Ian Brodie on a US grouping that nurtures the talents of high-achieving businesswomen

Top British businesswomen are to be invited to join a club so exclusive few people have heard of it. It is a self-help sisterhood, based in America, called The Committee of 200, an association of women who are corporate executives or who run their own firms. To qualify, corporate executives must direct a division with \$50 million (£31 million) in annual sales. Women running their own companies must have a minimum of \$10 million in sales.

In Britain, the bar for corporate candidates will be lowered to sales of \$30 million (£19 million), the limit for entrepreneurs stays at \$10 million. The committee, known as C200 for short, has quietly grown from 200 to 370 members since its unheralded founding 15 years ago. Among the brightest stars are Ann Fudge, president of Maxwell House Coffee, Ellen Gordon, president of Tootsie Roll Industries, the largest lollipop maker in the world, Elaine La Roche, Morgan Stanley's first female managing director, and Nina McLemore, who transformed an accessories unit for the Liz Claiborne apparel empire.

C200 has a proud record of sharing expertise, not only among themselves but with would-be executives who are just starting. Marcia Radosevich is such a beneficiary. An expert on health policy, she formed a health-care software company in Massachusetts six years ago and tapped into C200 for help in going public. She was awarded C200's Emerging Entrepreneur of the Year prize, giving her a one-year membership and unlimited access to the combined know-how of the members. They advised her on how to launch and promote her company, HPR Inc, and where to find funds.

Thanks to all the help, HPR

WOMEN WHO MAKE THE GRADE IN BRITAIN



From left: Anita Roddick, of Body Shop; Marjorie Scardino, of Pearson; and Ann Iverson, of Laura Ashley

WHEN the membership lists open for the British chapter of this club for female high-flyers, the entry qualifications will have to be less stringent than those in the US, or it will be a highly exclusive organisation. Women are still rarities at the top of British quoted companies.

Certainities to be on the guest list

for the official opening will be Marjorie Scardino, chief executive of Pearson, and Ann Iverson, chief executive of Laura Ashley. Ironically, the duo both hail from the United States. Anita Roddick is the most obvious home-grown candidate but she reached the heights by launching her own business, Body Shop.

They are all likely to support the principle of encouraging other women to join their ranks and reach for the top. The chances are that Ann Iverson, who is fighting against disastrous trading results at Laura Ashley, might also enjoy a little of the moral support that joining such an organisation can bring.

is listed on the Nasdaq exchange with a value of \$320 million. It has 180 employees and new offices opening around the US. As chairman and chief executive, Ms Radosevich has a salary of \$250,000 and has joined C200 — yearly dues are \$1,200. Nancy Peterson, mother of six children, says C200 is her "good ol' girls network". She is chief executive of Peterson Tool Company in Nashville, makers of precision-cutting tools for Ford, General Motors and other mass producers of metal parts. It is, she admits, an unusual time of work for a woman boss, but she has been there since 1979 when she was forced to conceal the sudden death of her husband and take charge. "It was such a male-

dominated business that I was convinced we'd lose our customers if they found out that a woman with no track record was running the firm," she says. So she and the staff kept quiet about the loss of John Peterson, who had died of cancer, just five weeks after being diagnosed. Mrs Peterson let six months pass before breaking the news to clients. By then, all had to admit that the firm's high engineering standards had not suffered.

Mrs Peterson says she often finds it is lonely at the top. That is when she most appreciates the inspiration she draws from C200. "I go to the meetings and get my fix. I come back energised by these women who have been there and done that. I know that I

can, too." Another member, Harriet Mouchly-Weiss, recalls her difficulties with partners when she was setting up Strategy 21, her Manhattan PR and consulting agency. C200 members gave her the backbone to hold out for what she wanted, a majority shareholding. "When your peer group gives you encouragement, you really listen," she said.

The chairman for C200's recruiting drive in Britain is the one member already living in London, Peggy Czynak-Dannenbaum, who runs CDM Holdings, investors in small, high-quality food businesses. A seminar to explain C200 to potential British members will be held in April. She already has a guest list in

mind, but is not disclosing any names because none of them has yet been invited.

She agreed there were already groups for successful women in Britain. They include Forum UK, to which she belongs, that draws its members from all walks of life. But she said that there was nothing comparable to C200's exclusive focus on businesswomen and on helping younger women to be successful in business.

C200's international chairman, Henrietta Holman Fore, who runs a firm making supporting frameworks for buildings in Las Vegas, said that another purpose of the proposed British branch was to reinforce the committee's international strength in an

increasingly global business world. For the same reason, an Asian group will be launched later this year in Hong Kong.

From the start, C200 has excluded men. Mrs Holman Fore explained: "When we began there were many venues in which men could meet one another, but a women's network was lacking. There was something unique about a woman's perspective that we thought we could capture in a women's organisation." In time she hoped that there might be no need for all-women or all-men organisations. "But for 15 years our camaraderie has been remarkable," she said.

Ms Radosevich tries to hire women executives for her software company but cannot find a sufficient supply of them with the talents she needs. C200 is the only single-gender group she has ever joined. Yet she feels there is a strong case for limiting membership to women, given their bleak statistics in the upper echelons of the workforce — only two women chief executives in all the Fortune 500 companies and women comprising only 10 per cent of their boards of directors.

Ms Radosevich said: "There are still so shockingly few women in executive positions in large corporations that many of us are starting our own companies simply to have more freedom as entrepreneurs." She believed C200's doctrine of helping one another had fully justified the vision of its founders — "there's advice I wouldn't feel as comfortable calling some guy to ask for".

Still, C200 is trying to grow beyond being simply a club for massaging egos and needs. Efforts are going into ensuring the younger generation is ready when the baton is passed. C200 members are expanding their appearances before women's business colleges: they are formalising a mentoring programme for young women in business; they are looking at ways women can promote philanthropy around the world and how members can perpetuate their legacy by endowing chairs for entrepreneurship.

C200 will also focus on an advertising campaign in the hope of building momentum around the message that business is good for women and women are good for business.

Regional airport sector poised for take-off

Mark Court finds that progress is not without problems for the likes of Luton

Most people living near Heathrow and Gatwick airports feel harassed by aircraft noise and appalled by the thought of new runways. In contrast, regional airports illicit quite different feelings. The people of Luton, Liverpool, Cardiff and a host of other towns and cities are filled with civic pride at having an airport near their homes.

Apart from local support, these airports, from the grandly named Bournemouth International to Scotland's Prestwick, are enjoying booming business. The momentum is coming simply from the rapidly growing number of passengers opting for air travel. The trend was confirmed yesterday when BAA — which operates seven of the largest airports in Britain — said it handled a total of 10.2 million passengers in July — the highest number of passengers it has recorded in a single month. Regional airports are also reporting record growth although, unlike BAA, their problem is investing to keep up with passenger growth.

But these airports, many of which are owned by local authorities, are proving as popular with the private sector as they are with local residents. Luton airport, run by its local council and handling more than two million passengers a year, has had a "very high level of interest" in its search for a private sector partner to run the airport.

The council turned to the private sector because it wants to spend £170 million over the next five years on a new taxiway, terminal and additional aircraft parking spaces. But the hunt for cash to improve the airport has ended in a high-profile row with EasyJet, the bargain basement airline that provides Luton with the bulk of its business. Stelios Haji-Ioannou, EasyJet's founder, the 30-year-old son of a Greek shipping tycoon, wants to run the airport himself but the council has barred him because of the "conflict of

interest in an airline taking over an airport". Haji-Ioannou is threatening to switch an unspecified amount of his cheap-and-cheerful operation to Liverpool, where the airport boasts just 625,000 passengers a year. The row looks more like sabre-rattling than an ultimatum. As John Kingsford, Luton airport's marketing director, said: "Our future is together in my view and I think EasyJet understands that."

EasyJet was already in negotiations with Liverpool as part of Haji-Ioannou's expansion plans before the rebuttal from Luton. Robin Tudor, Liverpool airport's commercial manager, said: "We are having lengthy talks with them for doing business out of Liverpool." Some believe Luton would be better off without EasyJet. One transport consultant said: "EasyJet is not the best idea for the airport because they are not putting money back in because the EasyJet idea is turn up, get on and fly. Luton's charter operators, Britannia and Debonair have longer check-in times so people go around shops, pubs and restaurants spending money."

Luton is particularly well placed to take advantage of the squeeze on charter flights currently taking place at Gatwick. The consultant said: "The charters cannot hold on to Gatwick for much longer because the scheduled carriers will want their slots. The natural move for the charters will be to Stansted and then Luton."

Expansion of the regional airports will bring lengthy public inquiries and ministerial decisions. But this is taking place in a political vacuum.

A Labour source said: "Within the party there was a big debate about what the line on regional airports should be. The result is that aviation will not be mentioned in the integrated transport policy document due out next Thursday. It should be addressed now before charter flights are priced out of the market with inevitable political consequences."

Board games

MICHAEL JACKSON is to join the board of the Royal Bank of Scotland. No, not that one. I mean the £270,000-a-year chief executive of the Birmingham Midshires.

However, if he is to become a board member of a plc he may have to become a little less economical with factuality. As the Building Societies Association conference last year, Jackson strenuously denied that the society had approached the West Bromwich about a takeover.



Nick Leeson will be unable to apply for a new BSc for whiz-kids

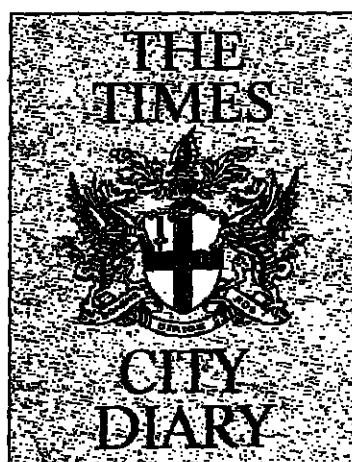
Within hours he was forced to recant that statement as "non-operational".

Jackson may also resolve to have better relations with his finance directors. One, Barry Cameron Small, held the post for just a few months two years ago. Last year, he was found dead in a fume-filled car. His widow claimed that he had personality clashes with Jackson, although this was not treated as the cause of his death. Small was succeeded by Stephen Bright, who also left after a short period.

AFTER the events at Chelmsford during the NatWest Trophy semi-final this week, City wags are starting to suggest that the crisis-ridden clearing bank can't even organise a cricket match without a fight breaking out.

Go direct

FORMER directors of Barings should head to the City University Business School where there are six places going a-begging on a new three-year BSc course entitled Investment and Financial Risk Management. Paul Dawson, the former director of stockbrokers Granville &



Co who runs the course, tells me he wanted to call the degree a "Bachelor of Rocket Science" so he could attract the sort of whiz-kids who go off and earn millions trading derivatives in all parts of the City apart from NatWest Markets.

However, the degree was not included in UCAS course listings for this year so City did not get the level of applications it hoped. Now Dawson is fretting that the places will be filled with rejects from other universities who had disappointing grades and are looking for places through the clearing system.

So he is appealing for direct applications and tells me that anyone turning up at his offices in the Barbican on Friday afternoon will be interviewed — and even offered a place —

on the spot. Alas Nick Leeson cannot get day release from Changji jail.

THERE may be chaos in the boardroom at United Utilities as Sir Desmond Pitcher clings on to power by his fingertips but the company presses on trying to bolster its pummeled image. United is embarking on a consultation in conjunction with Opinion Leader Research on its social responsibilities, asking the movers and shakers how the business should behave in certain areas. One is its responsibility to employment. No doubt a certain Brian Staples would like to make a contribution.

In the soup

BAD NEWS for Giles Shepard, managing director of the Ritz Hotel. Not only is he losing his executive chef, David Nicholls, who is replacing Marco Pierre White at the Hyde Park Hotel, but the AA says his departure means the Ritz Restaurant will lose its coveted rosette despite the new chef, Giles Thompson, having won a rosette at his last berth, Danesfield House. It appears the AA rosette is not transferable and the Ritz and Thompson have to be assessed again. Sounds like a good job for someone at the AA.

Hot seats

MY old mate Stephen Hinchliffe can't even go to a football match with-

out causing a furore. We reported the other week that the former boss of Farcia, the collapsed retailing group, was suing Mike McDonald, the Sheffield United chairman, over the sale of a 10 per cent stake in the club. Now McDonald has got his own back, banning Hinchliffe, a former deputy chairman of the club, and three of his friends from the directors' box. Hinchliffe is now suing to be allowed back in, claiming that McDonald promised him the four seats in a deal struck last October. Personally, I would pay not to have to watch Sheffield United.

JASON NISSE



"Times are hard — I'm afraid we are going to have to let you go"

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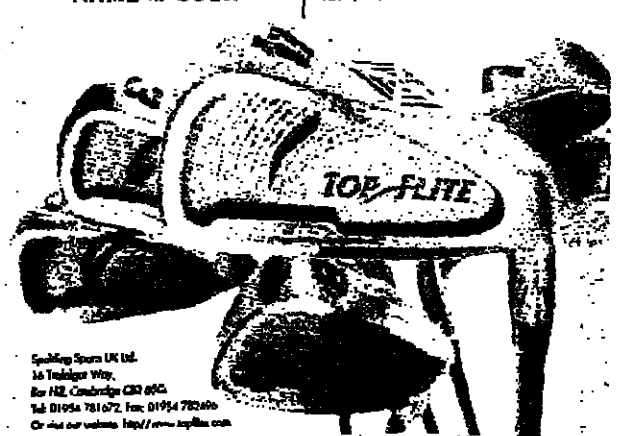
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ACCOUNTANCY

Turning principles into practice

Anthony Carey considers the latest report on corporate governance

Corporate governance should be more about the application of principles and less about box-ticking. Important though it is, this one conclusion in the preliminary report of the Hampel Committee on Corporate Governance has pushed the other 49 recommendations on matters such as enhancing the effectiveness of boards, setting directors' remuneration and improving AGMs into the background.

The most significant recommendations deal with the structure, membership and working practices of boards. This rightly recognises that the primary responsibility for good governance lies squarely around the boardroom table. The directors can prevent problems arising whereas shareholders and auditors are, by contrast, more likely to become involved once problems exist.

Hampel suggests that boards should consider introducing procedures to assess their collective performance as well as that of individual directors. While not supporting diversity for its own sake, the report argues that people from a wider range of backgrounds than currently represented on boards could make a real contribution as non-executive directors. It stops short of recommending a firm rule against combining the positions of chairman and chief executive but acknowledges

that these are distinct functions, generally best kept separate, and calls for companies to justify a decision to bring them together. Stronger support for keeping the two roles apart, accepted as best practice in recent years by most leading companies, could have been offered, but the proposed new disclosure is welcome. Hampel also believes a lead non-executive director should be identified by all listed companies, an extension of Cadbury's recommendation that this appointment be made when the chairman is also the chief executive.

When discussing the number of non-executive directors needed, Cadbury recommends that there should be three, of whom two should be independent. Hampel remains silent on what constitutes an independent director, a topic on which guidance would be helpful.

Taking account of the size of the board of most large listed companies, Hampel, however, states that to be effective, non-executives should account for at least a third of total board membership. With this further safeguard in place, there may have been merit in reducing the minimum number of non-executives needed, a move that would have helped smaller listed companies. The proposal that all directors should seek re-election at the AGM at intervals not exceeding three years is a useful strengthening



Anthony Carey highlights some of the concerns about Hampel

of the board's accountability to shareholders.

Disclosure of individual directors' remuneration packages together with the pension implications of pay increases, including their transfer values, is to continue. Hampel also advocates providing more meaningful general statements on remuneration policy and companies are told to be cautious about the way in which they use comparative studies of pay in other companies. They are furthermore urged to look

carefully at the detailed design of their incentive schemes to make sure that they fit the company's needs.

The practical suggestions for improving AGMs and increasing active shareholder participation include encouraging the adoption of the proposals set out in the Mytens report for strengthening corporate links with institutional investors; making better business presentations at AGMs and eliminating the practice of bundling a number of disparate proposals

together into a composite resolution at the AGM.

If implemented by listed companies, most of Hampel's recommendations would improve the governance of corporate Britain. Whether this happens could depend on the outcome of the principles and box-ticking issue. The Hampel report indicates that it is generally accepted that the Cadbury code has led to better governance and that Greenbury's primary aim of full disclosure is being achieved.

It also emphasises the need for broad principles to be established and says that flexibility in the interpretation of code provisions will sometimes be justified. The critical unanswered question, however, is the future relationship between the existing Cadbury and Greenbury codes and the new proposed principles. A consolidation of these three elements into a single set of principles and code is promised later in the year. If the principles are, in effect, added to the existing codes, making it harder to comply with their letter without also complying with their spirit, they will be an innovative addition to the present system. Some remain concerned, though, that the introduction of the principles will dilute the existing codes and make them more vague.

The devil, as always, is in the detail.

The author is secretary of the corporate governance group of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

Hampel suit cut from old flannel

THE more you read and think about the Hampel committee's draft report on corporate governance, the more you realise how much old flannel it is. And you also wonder whether the committee is quite as naive as it makes itself out to be, or whether it is simply trying to see what it can get away with.

First we have yet another dose of the old blather about rules versus principles. "Good corporate governance," says the report, "is not just a matter of prescribing particular corporate structures and complying with a number of hard and fast rules. There is a need for broad principles. All concerned should then apply these flexibly and with common sense to the varying circumstances of individual companies." Transfer the idea to road safety and you can see how stupid it is. Everyone knows people should drive carefully and sensibly without endangering fellow road-users and should park in places that cause no obstruction. But we also know that unless there are specific rules to enforce those principles their objectives can never be achieved.

Hampel's committee should have dropped in on Sir David Tweedie, the chairman of the Accounting Standards Board. When he is faced with whingeing finance directors moaning that accounting standards should be short statements of principles without any extra specific rules he tends to point out fairly sharply that the rules are there only because finance directors turn a blind eye to principles whenever it suits them. The same, as Hampel must well know, would happen on corporate governance. In the very first lines of the report the committee shows how feeble the basis of its arguments are. "The importance of corporate governance lies in its contribution both to business prosperity and to accountability," is how it starts. "In the UK the latter has preoccupied much public debate over the past few years to the detriment of the former. We would wish to see the balance corrected." Is the committee seriously suggesting that the prosperity of a company is incompatible with its board of directors being accountable to the shareholders? And is it seriously suggesting that reducing a board's accountability will lead to an increase in prosperity? This is the sort of old nonsense that used to turn up in a chairman's jocular prose when no one paid any attention to what the old charlatan said in the annual report and accounts. And then

there is the continuing nonsense about the use of the word "effective" when talking about internal controls. If it wasn't so important this part of the debate would be seen as farcical. Whenever anyone has recommended, as Cadbury did, that a board of directors should not only satisfy themselves that they had an effective system of internal controls in place but should also tell the shareholders, everyone throws their arms in the air and pretends this would be impossible.

The report gets to the heart of the matter. Completely deadpan it states that "the word 'effectiveness' has proved difficult both for directors and auditors in the context of public reporting." It might be more accurate to say that it has proved embarrassing rather than "difficult". It is supposed to be difficult. It is a board's duty, stating clearly that, as far as it knows, the company's risk-management processes are up to scratch. It is not an easy thing to which to put your signature. But being a director of a public company carries responsibilities and accountability. And such affirmations should not be possible to sidestep. Yet this is exactly what Hampel recommends. The report suggests the "effectiveness" element should be dropped. "This would recognise what is happening in practice and seems eminently sensible." It may seem eminently sensible to Hampel, but such comfy old boardroom practices are what have got us into the fine mess that the Cadbury committee was charged with clearing up.

The committee should be congratulated on one thing. It has expanded the scope of its brief, limited by dint of its brief, limited by dint of its brief. Hampel recommends the rules should apply to all relevant control objectives, which should include business risk assessment and response, financial management, compliance with laws and regulations and the safeguarding of assets, including the minimising of fraud.

These are areas that have come to be regarded as the heart of a company's systems. It is patently ridiculous to then suggest that directors should not have to report back to shareholders on their effectiveness. But then that is the Hampel committee all over. It should be disbanded and a body with a bit of backbone appointed.



ROBERT BRUCE

Fear and loathing

UNCERTAINTY is rife in Moorgate Place, HQ of the English ICA. The short lease that the institute had on the adjoining offices runs out soon and, despite the fashion being for central offices rather than relocation to faraway leafy places, the institute is intent on banishing its staff to Milton Keynes. This is causing more than a bit of consternation,

particularly among people on the practice regulation side. Raymond Fear, head of practice regulation and one of the highest paid institute staff in Bristol, drafted up a new savings plan. A client gave up smoking and was persuaded to invest the cost of his 50 fags a day in a monthly plan. "We calculate that by putting away the total savings," says the latest

Fag policy

THE enterprising financial advisers at Norton Partners in Bristol drafted up a new savings plan. A client gave up smoking and was persuaded to invest the cost of his 50 fags a day in a monthly plan. "We calculate that by putting away the total savings," says the latest

newsletter, "and assuming a 7 per cent investment return, he should be able to accumulate a fund of £38,000 after ten years — and be healthy enough to enjoy the proceeds." It makes a change from index-tracking.

Lucky generals

PEOPLE who worry that the Hampel committee's proposed

changes to the rules on the responsibilities of company boards are too onerous should take note of a tale from Eastern Europe. One UK adviser was taken aback at a recent offer by a gas company to take over a bank. "What," he asked diplomatically, "did the board of directors of a gas company know about banking?" And the irrefutable response: "They have some very good generals on the board."

ROBERT BRUCE

Court of Appeal

Law Report August 14 1997

Court of Appeal

Grantor without title cannot create tenancy

Bruton v London and Quadrant Housing Trust

Before Lord Justice Kennedy, Lord Justice Millett and Sir Brian Neill (Judgment July 31). It was not possible for a grantor who was known to have no title and who agreed to grant no more than a licence nevertheless to bring into being a tenancy by estoppel if he excluded himself and those claiming through him from possession.

The Court of Appeal so stated (Sir Brian Neill dissenting) in a reserved judgment dismissing the appeal of Gary Bruton against the order of June 28, 1996 of Judge James at Lambeth County Court, where on the trial of a preliminary issue, he held that Mr Bruton occupied premises as a licensee and not as a tenant.

London and Quadrant Housing Trust houses temporary housing in short life properties under a licence granted by Lambeth Council. Mr Bruton had signed an agreement with the trust to occupy a self contained flat in one such property. He argued before the county court that he was a tenant.

Mr David Watkinson for Mr Bruton; Mr Terence Gallivan for the housing trust.

SIR BRIAN NEILL, dissenting, said that he regretted being unable to agree especially that the trust's solution to a difficult problem appeared both socially desirable and eminently sensible.

His Lordship could not distinguish the case from the general principle laid down in *Street v Mountford* [1985] AC 809. Nor could he circumvent *Family Housing Association v Jones* [1990] 1 WLR 779.

no estate did not prevent a tenancy by estoppel arising.

"That estoppel was not a species of estoppel by representation but depended upon the fundamental principle of the common law that a grantor who excluded himself and those claiming through him from possession, nevertheless brought into being a tenancy by estoppel if he excluded himself and those claiming through him from possession. In *Street v Mountford*, Lord Templeman gave only three examples of exceptional circumstances where the grant of exclusive possession did not create a tenancy. First, where the circumstances negated any intention to create legal relations at all. Second, where the possession of the grantee was referable to some other legal relationship such as vendor and purchaser or master and servant. Third, where the grantor had no power to create a tenancy, as in the case of a requisitioning authority.

The first and third were not exceptions to a general rule: see *Camden London Borough Council v Shortlife Community Housing* [1992] 1 HLR 330.

The relationship of landlord and tenant was a legal relationship. It could not be brought into existence by an arrangement which was not intended to create legal relations at all or by a body which had no power to create it.

The existence of these two categories was due to the fact that the creation of a tenancy required the grant of a legal right to exclusive possession.

The precise scope of the third category was, however, not clear. Was it confined to want of capacity or did it extend to want of title?

It was submitted that the grant of exclusive possession of land for a fixed term at a rent created a tenancy: *Street v Mountford* [1985] AC 809.

The second was that the grantor of an interest in land was estopped from disputing the validity or effect of his own grant. A man who purported to grant a tenancy was not permitted to deny that he had done so by asserting his own want of title. If he had none, the grant created a tenancy by estoppel binding on him and those who

claimed through him, although it could not of course bind those with a superior title.

The question on the appeal was whether those two principles could be combined so that a grantor who had, and was known to have, no title, and who therefore agreed to grant no more than a licence, nevertheless brought into being a tenancy by estoppel if he excluded himself and those claiming through him from possession.

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First, where the circumstances negated any intention to create legal relations at all. Second, where the possession of the grantee was referable to some other legal relationship such as vendor and purchaser or master and servant.

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land or to grant tenancies of land which it owned. The problem was that the requisitioning authority had no power to acquire and did not acquire any estate or interest in the land which it requisitioned.

In *Lewisham Borough Council v Roberts* [1996] 2 KB 608, 622, the want of title was due to the absence of any power to acquire title to the property under the relevant regulations; but the inability to grant a tenancy was due to the want of title.

If that were correct, then the third category of case where the grant of exclusive possession did not create a tenancy might not be limited to the case where the grantor had no capacity to grant a tenancy, but might extend to the case where it had no estate or interest in the land which enabled it to do so. But that was not clearly demonstrated, for Lord Templeman did not have tenancies estopped in mind. It was necessary to consider how such tenancies arose.

His Lordship considered *Goodtitle v Bailey* (1777) 2 Cowp 547; *First National Bank v Thomson* [1996] Ch 237; *Morton v Woods* [1989] LR 4 Q8 293. The decision was therefore both peculiar and ancient.

It had sometimes been regarded as a special subspecies of estoppel by convention. His Lordship also referred to *Grundy v Great Boulder Proprietary Gold Mines Ltd* [1938] 58 CLR 641, 670.

In the present case both parties knew that the trust had no title and could not grant a tenancy. That was not sufficient to prevent the creation of a tenancy by estoppel. But the trust did not purport to grant a tenancy.

Tenancies by estoppel were developed at a time when title to land was doubtful and difficult to establish. They most frequently arose when the grantor's land was in mortgage.

In such a case the defect in title was technical and remediable and the parties could reasonably be supposed to be willing to disregard it. The circumstances of the present case were very different.

The trust had no title because the council had no power to grant it any. The case was, therefore, like that of the requisitioning authority, but at one remove.

It was submitted that that was contrary to *Street v Mountford*. The first step, it was said, was to construe the document in the light of that case and without regard to the fact that the trust had no title.

Despite the professed intention to create a licence, the document granted exclusive possession of the premises, and accordingly created a tenancy as between the parties. The trust's want of title did not affect the relationship as between them, though it prevented the tenancy being more than a tenancy by estoppel.

That was a powerful and attractive argument but in the end his Lordship was not persuaded by it. It seemed to his Lordship to

disregard both the reason for the first and third of the exceptions in *Street v Mountford* and the basis of the doctrine of tenancy by estoppel.

A tenancy was a legal estate. The essence of a legal estate was that it bound the whole world. The hallmark of a tenancy was the grant of exclusive possession. In that context, therefore, exclusive possession meant possession to the exclusion of the whole world, not merely of the grantor and those claiming through him.

If the grantor had no power to exclude the true owner from possession, he had no power to grant a legal right to exclusive possession and his grant could not take effect as a tenancy.

He might still be estopped from asserting his want of title, and if so his grant would create a tenancy by estoppel. But a tenancy by estoppel was not merely a particular species of tenancy which bound only the parties to it. It was firmly based on estoppel, and there could be no estoppel unless the grantor's denial of title was inconsistent with the terms of his grant.

In his Lordship's judgment the two doctrines could not be combined in the way contended for. They were, when analysed, mutually exclusive.

Street v Mountford rejected the professed intentions of the parties in favour of the effect of the transaction. Estoppel by convention gave effect to the professed intentions of the parties.

Any attempt to combine them produced a hopeless circularity. Approved separately, they had distinct requirements which were not satisfied in the present case.

His Lordship had not overlooked *Family Housing Association v Jones* [1990] 1 WLR 779 approved by Lord Templeman in *Westminster City Council v Clarke* [1992] 2 AC 289.

The facts of the earlier case were closely similar to the present. The arrangements were held to create a tenancy. But the fact that the grantor had no title was not referred to in argument or the judgments and its significance seemed to have been overlooked.

No consideration was given to the question whether the necessary conditions for a tenancy by estoppel existed. In his Lordship's judgment the court was not precluded from considering those questions for itself.

In his Lordship's opinion there was nothing in law to prevent a party in possession of land but lacking any legal estate or interest in the land from granting a licence to another to occupy the land.

Provided that the grantor made it clear that it was a licence only and not a tenancy, the grant would not take effect as a tenancy by estoppel.

Lord Justice Kennedy gave a judgment concurring with Lord Justice Millett.

Solicitors: G. L. Hockfield & Co, Kensington; Devonshires.

No fiduciary relationship by receipt of information

Indata Equipment Supplies Ltd (trading as Autofleet) v ACL Ltd

Before Lord Justice Simon Brown, Lord Justice Otton and Mr Justice Owen (Judgment July 31).

When a finance house with whom a broker was arranging finance for a client used confidential information provided by the broker as the basis for making an agreement directly with the client, the mere fact of the receipt of confidential information did not create a fiduciary relationship between the finance house and the client as to give rise to fiduciary obligations.

However, a blatant disregard for what should be commercial ethics and practice in the misuse of confidential information amounted to a breach of the equitable doctrine of confidence, and might also constitute the tort of unlawful interference with business.

The Court of Appeal so held when ordering a reduction of damages, to be assessed, but dismissing an appeal by the defendant, ACL Ltd, from a decision of Judge Young sitting as a High Court Judge on February 1, 1996 whereby he had awarded damages of £53,520 to the plaintiff, Indata Equipment Supplies Ltd.

Indata's claim against ACL was, inter alia, for unlawfully breaching the duty of confidentiality owed by ACL to Indata by revealing to a client of Indata the level of Indata's commission for utilising the knowledge of the level of commission representing the whole or part of Indata's commission and for, in breach of ACL's duty of confidentiality and fiduciary duty to Indata, agreeing to provide finance to Indata's client at a reduced rate, which reduction was possible by reducing the commission which would otherwise have been paid to Indata.

Mr Michael Kallipetis, QC and Mr Paul Staddon for ACL; Mr Michael Roberts for Indata.

LORD JUSTICE OTTON said that Indata operated as an independent broker or intermediary arranging finance in the field of, inter alia, motor vehicles and computers. In the normal course of business, brokers received instructions from clients to approach finance houses with a view to providing the broker's clients with financial arrangements.

ACL was a company of the Standard Charter Group and its business included fleet vehicle management services and providing finance and allied services.

AST Training plc was established in 1993 to provide training through government owned training centres located throughout the United Kingdom and needed to

acquire finance for plant and equipment.

Indata had arranged finance for AST to acquire new computers. In February 1994, AST needed to finance a new fleet of cars as its existing hire agreement with Lex was due to expire.

AST approached Toyota and placed a provisional order. Toyota provided "on the road" prices to Indata. Upon instructions from AST, Indata provided a quotation of the finance costs which was more competitive than that of Toyota and was accepted on March 7. AST never queried the Indata finance figures and made no effort to better the quote.

On the same date, Mr Tarr, managing director of Indata, approached Mr Pile of Standard Charter with a view to financing the AST transaction. Indata did a considerable amount of business with Standard Charter.

Mr Pile passed on the introduction to ACL and Mr Gary Jeffries, a sales executive at ACL's Wokingham branch office, whereupon Mr Tarr passed to ACL important information concerning AST including their requirements and that the present arrangements with Lex were about to expire. Mr Pile specifically counselled Mr Jeffries against going behind Indata's back and cutting it out.

In its appeal, ACL did not attempt to set aside the judge's adverse findings of fact against Mr Jeffries and acknowledged that his conduct was reprehensible. But ACL contended that, deplorable as his behaviour might have been, it did not found any cause of action.

Applying the principles in *Lac Minerals Ltd v International Corona Resources Ltd* [1989] FSR 441, a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada, his Lordship concluded that he could not support the judge's finding that there existed a fiduciary relationship between the parties or a situation where fiduciary obligations were imposed upon ACL.

The relationship of broker to finance house did not fall within the established categories recognised by the law. The parties were at all times at arms' length in the market.

Neither had undertaken to act on behalf of or for the benefit of the other, nor was there any other duty of loyalty and fidelity. The nature of the information imparted did not raise a presumption that fiduciary obligations arose.

There was no particular vulnerability of Indata when it voluntarily imparted the information to ACL. The fact that Mr Jeffries behaved in such a disgraceful manner and that Mr Tarr reposed confidence in him, which he would not have done if he had known the other's true intentions, was not sufficient to make their relationship a fiduciary one.

His Lordship accepted the submission that there could not be a fiduciary relationship in that situation where the broker expected the finance house to earn a profit on its finance charges. The *Lac Minerals* case envisaged that where the essence of the complaint was misuse of confidential information, the appropriate cause of action lay in breach of confidence. Primarily, the plaintiff's deal to a lesser degree of confidentiality between Indata and ACL were items of confidential information. That information was given to Jeffries in circumstances of confidence and was then misused by him for his own purposes and without Indata's consent.

That plainly amounted to a breach of the equitable doctrine of confidence. The profit margin and the methodology of remuneration were confidential to Indata and Mr Jeffries misused that information to put forward a rival deal to AST. The judge did not fall into error in concluding that there was an actionable breach of confidence.

His Lordship also held that the breach of confidence coupled with the ruthless conduct of Mr Jeffries would amount to unlawful means so as to establish the tort of unlawful interference with the business interests of Indata.

However, his Lordship did not agree with the judge's assessment of damages. The judge had awarded damages of £53,520 to Indata, namely, what Indata had purchased the vehicles from it rather than from Toyota direct.

The correct measure of damages was on a tortious basis, namely, such sum as would have put the plaintiff into the position it would have been in had it not been for the tort or breach of confidence.

Mr Justice Owen delivered a concurring judgment.

LORD JUSTICE SIMON BROWN said it seemed to him that the focus was hitherto too much on ACL's disclosure to AST of Indata's invoice prices of the vehicles to them, and altogether too little on ACL's misuse to their own ends of the information communicated to them by Indata as to AST's precise financing requirements.

The focus of his Lordship had great difficulty in regarding as tortious; the latter was plainly so. While, therefore, in the result he shared Lord Justice Otton's view that the appeal failed on the issue of liability because of ACL's breach of confidence, he would place the factual emphasis rather differently.

His Lordship expressed no view on liability for the tort of unlawful interference but agreed on the issue of fiduciary relationship and on the proper measure of damages.

Solicitors: Eversheds, Cardiff; Nabarro Nathanson.

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THE TIMES THURSDAY AUGUST 14 1997

What they
in their

Lost in the Bermuda triangle of ideas

NEW MOVIES: Geoff Brown
finds that about all *Speed 2* has in common with its predecessor is Sandra Bullock in the firing line

Things could be worse, I suppose. They could have set the sequel to *Speed* on something as slow as a tank, or the back of a tortoise. In fact, the characters gather on a cruise ship, still not the nicest mode of transport.

This is bizarre. The main virtue of *Speed* three summers ago was its careening pace, in synch with the bus wired to ignite if ever the speedometer fell below 50. But not even a vengeful hijacker played by Willem Dafoe can persuade the main prop in *Speed 2: Cruise Control* to break maritime records as it roams the Caribbean waters. This literary ship gleams. It glides. It nearly collides with an oil tanker. But it never moves quickly. Fault number one.

Fault number two is the ragbag of a plot, apparently put together from other movies by Jan De Bont and Randall McCormick with assistance from Sandra Bullock, who zoomed to stardom by driving the bus in the original. Once more we get the disgruntled employee inflicting a disproportionate revenge: connoisseurs may like to compare Dafoe's peeved computer fellow with Eric Bogosian's missile genius in *Under Siege 2* who hijacked a train and threatened to end the world if he was not paid \$1 billion.

Another cliché is the fortuitous presence of tough guys and gals off-duty. The line-up does not include Keanu Reeves, Bullock's original team-mate, who declined to board the sequel. So it is left to Bullock to say the line "Oh no, this is my vacation, damn it," as Dafoe disables the ship's controls and throws the captain overboard.

Poor thing, she was looking forward to six days of sun and lounging about with Jason Patric, a SWAT team member with marriage on his mind, who is trying to make amends for keeping his dangerous job a secret. Now she has to show spunk and muscle, get soaking wet, rescue a deaf girl trapped in a lift, wield a chainsaw, ride jet skis and be taken hostage.

But no matter what mayhem Dafoe's *Speed 2* never generates the excitement it should. For all the director's spectacle and wreckage, and director De Bont's skill in cutting action to the bone, the action highlights plop into place mechanically. And characters are often scattered too far — on the ship, in the water, or on a porpoised speedboat — for them to strike sparks off each other.

They have difficulty enough striking sparks by themselves. We have seen too many gig-

gling psychos be thrilled by their own demise as explosions written in golf clubs and a bathtub of teeth. Patric, a perky dentist, himself forward, his job is to be modestly heroic while making it. Bullock's shadow, Bullock, paddles her girl-next-door charm and ditty chatter well enough, but never generates enough sustained character to surmount the script's deficiencies. *Speed* should have stayed a one-off.

Coming upon *The Cloud-Capped Star* after *Speed 2* is like being transported to another planet. The differences lie not so much in the

Speed 2: Cruise Control

Odeon West End
PG, 125 mins
Dawdling sequel to the summer hit of 1994

The Cloud-Capped Star

National Film Theatre
126 mins
Compelling melodrama from India's Ritwik Ghatak

Heat and Dust

Curzon Mayfair
15, 130 mins
Merchant-Ivory revived

setting — even though this Indian film from 1960 unfolds in a shanty town outside Calcutta — but in the film-makers' attitudes. *Speed 2* was made to a formula that experience shows satisfies the crowds. This was not the way of Ritwik Ghatak, the combative director of *The Cloud-Capped Star*, who once dismissed cinema's mass audiences as "one great wall," a wall erected between his films and the appreciation of them.

Ghatak, a Marxist and Bengali patriot who drank himself to death in 1976, aged 50, also believed in cinema "as a weapon, as a medium to express my views". For *Speed 2* speedsters, cinema is an amusement park ride, transferred to the screen, and a medium for making money. Both views are valid. Cinema is both art and industry. Ghatak, in any case, was no out-and-out radical. *The Cloud-Capped Star*, which receives seven performances during a Ghatak tribute at the National Film Theatre, draws sustenance from popular melodrama and Bengali myth. Nor did Ghatak stand aloof. This is cinema at its most passionate and humane. You are forced to care for the heroine's fate.



Jason Patric gets himself into another fine mess as *Speed 2*'s modest but superhuman hero, the role so memorably undertaken by Keanu Reeves in the far superior *Speed*

The eldest daughter in a family living in Calcutta since Bengal's dismemberment, Neeta wears herself down to keep them in funds. Mother nags her. Father walls. She abandons her education. She loses her fiancé. One brother dies away his time waiting for fame as a singer, another suffers a factory accident. By the end, both have pulled through, but Neeta lies in a sanatorium, dying of tuberculosis, crying to the hills: "I wanted to live!"

Supriya Choudhury is tender and natural as the story's sacrificial victim. But the film's expressive force chiefly derives from Ghatak's control over image and sound. Anguished faces, light filtering through window blinds, advancing trains, sheltering

trees: every component is carefully positioned for emotional impact, although without any hint of academicism.

Ghatak uses the soundtrack particularly boldly. Sound effects slip out of synch with their images. Impassioned melodies float in and out. The music toys with folk traditions, but also finds room for percussive clatter and electric trills that to Western ears usually herald the arrival of a creature from outer space.

Not that Ghatak's art is in any way alien. He may be the product of a particular time and place: the Second World War and his country's partition fuelled his insistence that art relates to ordinary life,

particularly the refugee experience. But he can leap over time and continents to connect with any questioning audience. And his art is not all jagged, poetic moments. Besides these, in *The Cloud-Capped Star* the eye is drawn to the throwaway details of Indian life: the BOAC airline bag slung round the singer's shoulder, indicating his worldly success; "Lorna Darkens the Hair" — hung from a lamp post on a Calcutta street. Why would a dark-haired nation need to buy this?

Compared to Ghatak's fiery films, the Indian forays of the Merchant Ivory team cannot but seem flat-footed. To mark the 50th anniversary of India's independence, three of their productions are being re-released in new prints: the

engaging *Shakespeare Wallah* of 1965, based on the experiences of Felicity Kendal's family of travelling players; the hour-long *Autobiography of a Princess* (1975); and *Heat and Dust* (1982), the film that introduced us to Greta Scacchi. All offer thoughtful observations about the legacy of the British Raj. All benefit from finely modulated performances, while *Heat and Dust*, especially, glories in turbans, banqueting feasts and glistening jewellery.

But cinematically, Ivory offers nothing to match the excitement of Ghatak's experimentation. Any passion, like Scacchi's for the charismatic Nawab of Shashi Kapoor, is held in check. These may be films to admire, but they do not stir the blood.

'One dull ride'

Every week, young film fans discuss the latest releases...

■ SPEED 2
Damian Samuels, 20: The makers obviously went to a large book called *Action Movie Cliches* for ideas. Georgina Lamb, 18: Sadly, this was utter rubbish. Leslie (Sarah Thomas, 19): The original *Speed* was funny, a little dark and had urgency by the bucketload. This is one dull ride by comparison. Sarah Crook, 18: Very formulaic — even Sandra Bullock can't keep this aloft.



■ HEAT AND DUST
Damian: Merchant Ivory films usually fall into two categories — fascinating and beautiful or dull and beautiful. This falls into the latter. Georgina: Greta Scacchi is absolutely divine in this typically stylish costume drama. Leslie: A much welcomed release of a superbly made film. Sarah: Merchant Ivory at their very best.

What they really did in their holidays

NEW ON VIDEO

LOOKING FOR RICHARD
Fox Guild, 12, 1996
AL PACINO's infectious and lively film about the appeal of Shakespeare and *Richard III* is part documentary, part filmed play, shot on the run over the past few years in between the assignments that paid the bills. Pacino interviews actors, academics and passers-by on Bardic matters. Interspersed come rehearsals and performances of the play with a star-studded cast: Pacino as Richard, Kevin Spacey as Buckingham, Alec Baldwin as Clarence. Available to rent.

THE GHOST AND THE DARKNESS
CIC, 15, 1996

UNDULY ponderous action drama with intellectual trimmings, based on the true tale of two lions who dogged a British attempt in the late 19th century to build an African railway and control the ivory trade. Not enough happens when something does, it is camouflaged by fancy photography. And there is not enough sense of time and place: backgrounds may be authentic, but the front is taken up by Michael Douglas and Val Kilmer, two Hollywood stars far from home. Available to rent.

LADY FROM LOUISIANA
4-Front, U, 1991

JOHN WAYNE was biding his time at Republic Pictures, hoping for better things, when he made this curious period drama about a reforming attorney and a Southern belle



Julie Moret, Kevin Conway and Al Pacino in the latter's homage to Shakespeare's *Crookback*, *Looking for Richard*

(Ona Munson) on opposite sides of a gambling racket. As usual, director Bernard Vorhaus does "the best job possible with the material on offer, and rounds off the movie in grand style with the Mississippi threatening to flood New Orleans.

RASPUTIN

Mosaic, 15, 1996
ALAN RICKMAN, drenched in straggly hair and sweat, makes a convincing mad monk in this award-winning cable television drama, filmed in St Petersburg and Budapest. The pomp and ceremony is par for the course for superior TV, and as usual the grip on the story's characters places it above the norm: Ian McKellen and Greta Scacchi form a poignant pair as Tsar

Nicholas and his wife, who come under Rasputin's sway. The director is Uli Edel, who has learnt restraint since the days of *Last Exit to Brooklyn*. Available to rent.

WALKING AND TALKING

Electric, 15, 1996
EMOTIONAL adventures of young New Yorkers who shuttle between apartments and coffee shops, cinemas and therapists, analysing their lives, walking and talking. Nicole Holofcener's debut feature takes a female perspective on the Manhattan merry-go-round, and peppers the script with funny lines. Engaging players — Catherine Keener, Anne Heche — squeeze a kaleidoscope of feelings into a tiny space. Available to rent.

GEOFF BROWN

NEW CLASSICAL CDS: All-out mezzo attack; bright but obscure Vivaldi; and highs in Loewe

John Higgins
The recital has the great plus of being accompanied by the Dresden Staatskapelle under Colin Davis. Mozartians all to their combined fingertips.

■ VESSELINA KASAROVA
Mozart arias
Dresden Staatskapelle/Davis
RCA 09026 68661 *** £14.99
KASAROVA is the fiercest of the outstanding bunch of young mezzo-sopranos who have emerged over the past few years. Like her Bulgarian compatriot Juveta Weitch she delights in high-tension music, fearless in her attack and quite unafraid of letting all her emotions show. These qualities were well to the fore when she took the title role in Rossini's *Tancredi* for RCA a year ago.

She is on the warpath again at the start of this Mozart recital with a performance of *Smante implacabili*, from *Così fan tutte*. Rarely has the character of Dorabella sounded more offended as she calls for the light and air to be shut out lest they intrude on her grief. Idamante's two arias from *Idomeneo* suit Kasarova well too.

But tenderness and pity are not yet in Kasarova's armoury, as her excursions into the soprano repertoire prove. Elvira's *Mi tradi* and Zerlina's *Vedrai carino* from *Don Giovanni*, for example, are notably less successful.

Kasarova clearly enjoys being the aggressor and using her extraordinary chest register. She sounds perfectly happy when wearing the trousers of a Roman soldier's tunic, but dispensing feminine balm is another matter altogether.

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345 023498

ORCHESTRAL
Barry Millington

■ VIVALDI
6 Viola Concertos, Op.12
Bezostuk/AAM/Hogwood
L'Oiseau-Lyre 443 556-2 *** £15.49
VIVALDI'S Op.12 set of violin concertos has no fancy name such as *L'Estro Armonico* or *La Stravaganza* to boost it, and contains nothing as celebrated as the Seasonal offerings of Op.8. Yet this set of six concertos is scarcely less inventive than any of the better

known sets. Certainly in these spirited accounts by Pavlo Bezostuk (playing a 1760 instrument from the Hill workshop) with the Academy of Ancient Music under Christopher Hogwood there is never a dull moment.

Vivaldi may have written for more colourful combinations of solo instruments, but there is ample compensation here in the range of moods evoked, from dreamy, rhapsodic slow movements to virtuosic quick-metre finales. There is also a piece, No.3 in D, which is effectively a concerto a quattro, giving rise to wonderfully spacious textures, admirably caught here.

Bezostuk is fully up to the virtuosic demands of the solo writing, and Hogwood provides invigorating, sympathetic accompaniments.

VOCAL
Hilary Finch

■ CARL LOEWE
Lieder Vol.7
Schmidt/Carben
CPO 999 305-2 *** £14.99
AS A parallel but more shadowy project to Hyperion's Complete Schubert Edition, the CPO label is conscientiously building an aural encyclopaedia of the songs and ballads of Schubert's later contemporary, Carl Loewe. Loewe, who travelled playing and singing his own songs, was far less discriminating than Schubert in the texts he chose, and much of his output consists of long historical ballads which acted as a sort of narrative performance art.

Cord Garben, pianist and

deviser of the series, has entrusted the fine baritone Andreas Schmidt with this volume. In order to win the plums — songs like the spooky *Herr Oluf* and the witty and brightly heraldic *Count Eberstein* — Schmidt also has to undertake the ten-minute parable *Kaiser Otto's Christmas* and the somewhat dubious *Mohrenfirst* trilogy: a Biedermeier view of Negro life, giraffes, crocodiles, slavery and all.

The standard of performance and the opportunities for discovery make this disc and this series a valuable and entertaining enterprise, certainly worth a periodic tasting and testing.

★ Worth hearing
★★ Worth considering
★★★ Worth buying

"YOU'LL LOVE IT TO DEATH...MADE MY HEART ACHE, MY EYES WEEP AND MY BELLY LAUGH...WHAT MORE CAN YOU ASK FROM A MOVIE?" ★★★★★ THE DAILY MIRROR

"This is a brilliant film and you'll laugh until you cry"

NEW WOMAN

ROSEANNA'S GRAVE

"A life affirming comedy to see after a bad day at the office"

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EDINBURGH FESTIVAL: Aboriginal dance, Hungarian concertos, epic Bach, Indian anguish and triumphant Verdi

Distress call from heart of Australia

In the early years of this century white Australians were still venturing out into the woods in the remote Northern Territories to hunt Aborigines. In more recent years white Australians have been taken to task for their appalling crimes against Aboriginal children. And today a proud indigenous culture, which thrived for millennia before the Europeans arrived, stands destroyed by colonial arrogance. It's enough to make any right-thinking person angry.

This is the anger that Stephen Page and his creative team want you to feel upon watching *Fish*, the new piece from Bangarra Dance Theatre given its premiere on Tuesday. We know this because the voice that launches *Fish* tells us so. It also tells us that the members of Australia's leading Aboriginal ensemble are burning with a desire for justice. But, more than this, they are burning with a desire to reclaim their ancestral culture.

Fish is inspired by the Aboriginal's deep connection with the natural elements; fish are the unborn souls, haunted individuals waiting for their chance to be mortal. Described as a "journey through three worlds", *Fish* moves from swamp to river to ocean, an ever-changing landscape through which churning nature's mysteries.

As Page's choreography makes clear, the inhabitants of this spirit-soaked world are not on the earth but of the earth. At times, you feel they are even in the earth, so strong is their affinity for its murky energies. Water is the giver of life; it purifies and invigorates us, and we are humbled by its very intensity.

In the swamp, the work's strongest section, dancers slip into reed cages like creatures of a dank, dense underworld. The women are presented as crouching, feral beasts, charged with a crude sexuality. Later on, though, the

DANCE

dancers look like street kids, the disaffected youth you would find in any city. A majestic lone figure, Djakapurra Munyaryyun, wanders throughout like a shadowy echo of ancient tribal voices.

Despite its overwhelming cultural agenda, Bangarra (it means to make fire) is, according to Page, primarily a contemporary dance company. Eschewing the traditional mythological stories, *Fish* uses a variety of dance styles to tell its new urban myths, from academic contemporary dance to the movement language of late 20th-century cities. But as a choreographer Page lacks the range to give his language full descriptive powers, especially when it comes to anger.

He is not helped by David Page's score (a third Page brother, Russell, is one of the dancers). The music is a dire amalgam of thickest symphonic rock and the noisy thump and crash of the urban aural landscape. The composer has abandoned the digression, capable of haunting resonances, in favour of the synthesizer, a monumentally bland music-maker, while the traditional Aboriginal percussion, the clap sticks, are forced to bow to a full Western drum sound.

In the end, it is this stylistic cross-dressing which scuppers *Fish*. Composer and choreographer have borrowed from one culture in order to illuminate another, but have not made a convincing case for either. The only message you take away from this production is that Aboriginal culture is doomed to be forever outgunned by the spiritual bankruptcy of the MTV generation.

DEBRA CRANE



The "majestic figure" of Djakapurra Munyaryyun in Bangarra Dance Theatre's new work, *Fish*.

Keyboard classes in Bartók and Bach

CONCERTS

ALTHOUGH it was one of the most attractive prospects of this year's festival, by the halfway stage it was not looking so good. The public had evidently decided that two Bartók piano concertos were one or two too many, and András Schiff had just delivered an underpowered account of the first of them. Yet by the end of the evening the Usher Hall audience was demanding encores.

One reason was that in the interval the soloist had changed pianos, discarding a rather dull instrument for a much brighter one. Another was that Schiff clearly likes Bartók's Third Piano Concerto more than he likes the First, the essentially percussive nature of which he seems unable to accept.

But his interpretation of the Third Concerto was one of rare radiance and lyrical beauty, taking a relaxed joy in the flexibility of the melodic line and its decorative elaborations, and celebrating the paradoxical exuberance of the dying composer in the not quite complete last movement.

At the same time, the more the audience got to know Ivan Fischer and the Budapest Festival Orchestra, the more it got to like them. It is

an ensemble distinguished not only by its high-quality technical accomplishment but also by the freshness of its approach to a score as familiar as Stravinsky's *Firebird* suite. As he demonstrated in an eccentric series of encores — the tiny piccolo solo from Bartók's Romanian Dances and the off-stage horn Epilogue from Britten's *Serenade* preceding the inevitable Brahms Hungarian Dance — Fischer is a conductor with a rare sense of humour as well as a liberated imagination.

Before that concert Peter Hurford gave the first of an epic series of 15 recitals of Bach organ works. Greyfriars Kirk is clearly going to be the centre of a minor cult during the next two or three weeks. The atmosphere inside the church is serene, the Peter Collins organ a model of acoustic clarity and of modesty not normally associated with the instrument, and Hurford's playing is inspired rather than intimidated by the enormity of what he has taken on.

GERALD LARNER

Grandly unstaged

OPERA

Macbeth
Festival Theatre

IRONICALLY enough, the performances of *Macbeth* reduced to concert form turned out to be the hit of this year's Verdi Festival at Covent Garden, and if Edinburgh audiences were feeling short-changed they were not showing it. The first of the Royal Opera's three repeats played to a Festival Theatre noticeably fuller than for *Platée*, and was received with uproarious enthusiasm. Rightly so, as Tuesday's performance had the edge even on the first night in London.

And "edge" is the word. Edward Downes emphasised the febrile quality of Verdi's scoring to conjure up a world dangerously out of kilter. This was especially true of the Banquet Scene, where instead of apologising for Lady Macbeth's *Drinking Song* he revelled in its brassy vulgarity, and the neurotically diphthong orchestral paragraphs that surround it.

Anthony Michaels-Moore's *Macbeth* is of course a decidedly more interesting character, and the white-hot intensity of his interpretation stifled any sense of incongruity between white-tie formality and more than vestigial action (the chorus, on marvellous form, have discarded their scores since

London, adding to the impression of a staged performance). The usurper's feelings are written on Michaels-Moore's face: terror, doubt, thin-tipped determination, and — terrifyingly — self-knowledge in *Pietà, rispetto, amore*.

Georgina Lukács has relaxed — if that is the right word for anyone singing Lady Macbeth — since London, with more expressive metal in her tone; Dennis O'Neill (Macduff) and Roberto Scanduzzi (Banquo) were outstanding as before. The sheer conviction of the performance of this first (1847) version cast doubts on some of the revisions. Of course the 1865 score is "better", but why did Verdi bother to rewrite the stirring Exile's Chorus, or jettison Macbeth's cabaret *Vada in fiamme*, a far stronger curtain number for the Apparition Scene than the duet that replaces it? Food for thought.

RODNEY MILNES

Sour view of Indian dream

On a trapeze two bored-looking men carrying a bier on which lies a corpse wrapped from head to toe in white. They look despairingly up. Is there a vulture about? No, not even a kite or a crow. The conversation turns to methods of taking revenge on wrongdoers and their families by ensuring that the souls of the dead do not escape their bodies. Then comes news of those missing birds. There have been riots in the local town that have left scores of Muslims and Hindus massacred. If this goes on, what's to become of those who earn their bread by ensuring bones are properly soured?

The views of Parsee undertakers are, I suppose, heard in the theatre about as often as those of Bornean knife-grinders or Greenland chimney-sweepers. But could there be a more interestingly oblique way of looking at the great events that happened in India half a century ago? The company responsible, Tamasha, came from nowhere last year with *East is East*, a highly impressive play about the



Parminder K. Nagra in the fine *A Tainted Dawn*

travails of the Asian British. Now it consolidates its reputation with an intimate epic (sponsored by A.A. Brothers), whose title and subtitle, "images of partition", is clearly meant to forewarn audiences that 50 years of independence are not going to be straightforwardly celebrated.

THEATRE

Actually, celebration is on the mind of those crammed into the tiny railway compartment in which Sudha Bhuchar and Kristine Landon-Smith's play opens. It is 1947, and they are travelling to Delhi to see Nehru take power from the British. But quarrels break out in the carriage. Riots occur at a stopover. A studious-looking Hindu passenger answers a Muslim's request to help him aboard by hitting him over the head. And then, up go the stage-lights to reveal the only permanent features of Sue Mayer's set: two trees as gnarled and bare as their counterpart in *Waiting for Godot* and, like it, representing the blasting of hope.

As schisms worsen, the eight-person cast makes nonsense of its numbers by mounting scenes in which tens of terrified villagers run from their burning homes, scores of

refugees hurry onto lorries, and troupes of bent, exhausted people trudge into transit camps. Some are Hindus, some are Muslims, and all are evidence that the dream of a secular state, hospitable to all faiths, is ending in division, death and the enforced exchange of populations.

Individual stories surface too. Shaheen Khan's Laurie, who fancied herself "the Indian Lauren Bacall", ends up with a baby and a mother-in-law in a remote village. Badi Uzzaman's Rannath visits the house in Pakistan he loved and lost, to find it in ruins. But the authors linger longest over Pali, who is misled by his Hindu parents in the chase of departure, adopted by Muslims, and, when restored to his mother, seems as divided as the sub-continent itself.

Could the play go deeper, explore further? I suppose so. But I doubt if any theatre company anywhere will bring the disappointment and disillusion of 1947 so grittily to life.

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THE TIMES

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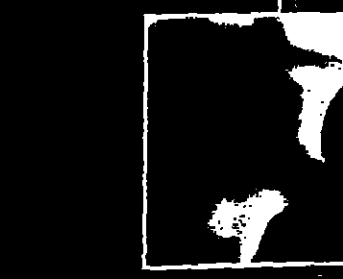


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Rameau
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Mark Morris
with the
Mark Morris Dance Group
Conducted by
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The Turn of the Screw
Britten
Directed by
Deborah Warner
Conducted by
Colin Davis



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Malcolm Bradbury on the return of Saul Bellow

The world in a grain of sand

In 1976 Saul Bellow won the Nobel Prize for Literature, joining the pantheon of American literary greats — Hemingway, Faulkner, Steinbeck — to which he so rightly belonged. His fame, literary, intellectual, moral, lay with his big books, filled with their big, clever, flowing prose, and their big, more-than-lifesize heroes — Augie Marches, Hendersons, Herzogs, Humboldts — who fought the battle for courage, intelligence, selfhood and a sense of human grandeur in the postwar age of expansive, materialist, high-powered, Chicago-style American capitalism.

Now and again, this ebullient line of novels — critical explorations of a fast-moving age that included the end of heroic Modernism, the rise of the easy-going counter-culture, the age of space-science and Moonshot, the rot of the great American cities — was interrupted by something more modest. There were smaller books, reading more like meditations. In 1950 came the outstanding *Seize the Day*, a speculation on commerce, rogues and mortality. It ends at the funeral parlour, the coffin-side — an ever-familiar Bellow location — as the weak, money-wounded hero cries over a stranger and faces his soul's need.

In recent years, since the Nobel, the big books have faded, the meditations prospered. Bellow has concentrated on the novella, a form of fiction that demands less plot than distinct universe and atmosphere: a tone of voice, a distilled set of essential scenes, a power of mind. Written in his 81st year, *The Actual* is the newest — Bellow's first work of fiction for ten years (a recent set of autobiographical essays has stood a while as his latest book).

Bellow has now left Chicago for New England. But the Windy City — a material city pervaded nonetheless by mind, as he once said — remains his prime fictional landscape. Now it's an urbane world of rich aged survivors, Jewish "notables" who have made it, rogue materialists with a touch of class, a taste for art and a gift of cunning genius, living high on accumulation. Bellow's characters have generally been ageing along with their author. These

THE ACTUAL
A NOVELLA
By Saul Bellow
Viking, £12.99
ISBN 0 670 88075 1

are people in what he nicely calls "the last phase of maturity", when "one could, one should, be honest with oneself".

Even so, they haven't lost their edge. *The Actual* is a tale told by Harry Trellman, "a concealed man", a "masked character". He's a very Bellowian type, with an orphan background, and an international history in commerce and art that's had its own share of shady dishonesties. He's taken up by

elderly well-heeled "notables" of *The Actual* see themselves as cunning tricksters: figures from "the advanced counter-cultural lifestyle", rogues, alternative types, still playing sharpsters' games with each other. Madge Heisinger — once imprisoned for the hit on her husband — is full of mystifications, not least a "divorce registry service", which does for divorces what other services do for brides. For the aged, sex and sexual attraction still play a large part in their thoughts and deeds. Amy's now-dead former husband has been a sexual experimentalist to the last; Harry sees love as "a lengthy intelligence job". One of Bellow's gifts is to invest the aged with erotic energy and physical charm.

It all ends, again, at a graveside, or two of them — somewhere between a shadow and a shade of one of the departed. Amy's husband, having mischievously arranged to be buried beside her mother, has really arranged to come back from the grave. He must now be dislodged to vacate the space for the appropriate tenant, her father. The past is brought back in the cemetery as exhumation takes place; the story ends as the husband is reinterred in his second grave. This becomes the scene for the last romance, and the book closes with a proposal. The elderly game has a romantic outcome; that's the actual.

It's light in story — a set of characters, mystifications, glimpses — this book is rich (and for Bellow readers delightfully familiar) in atmosphere. It's to be relished, as Bellow's later narrations, for the still-mischievous, mordant wit ("Paris is just New York in French"), the magisterial prose, the elegantly elegant sensibility. Now there's something almost 18th-century about Bellow's courtly Chicago — where wealth permits thought, old games of cunning and survival still go on, and always under the teasing gaze of an elderly philosopher (masked Harry, Bellow too) for whom the gift of social, moral and sexual observation, the testing of lives, the eternal reminder of mortality, the glare of sceptical reason, the application of wit and the call of "the actual" are the way to perceive the human condition.



Bellow: wit, sceptic and social observer

an elderly Chicago billionaire, because he is that useful figure: a truly observant man, with an eye to pretensions and foibles. The billionaire is buying an expensive apartment from another honcho, whose greatest claim to fame is that he has willingly remarried a wife who once put out a hit on him. The heart of the story is set on the day of a Chicago blizzard, when their various stories unfold. In the process, Harry is brought back into contact with the distant love of his lifetime, Amy Wustrin. Bellow's later tales (*Him With His Foot In His Mouth*, *The Bellarosa Connection*, etc.) have been a series of wise comedies, filled with odd character types, all with their own baroque arts of mystification. To the end of things, the

Before his Kingdom came

Greil Marcus
on two books
which shed
dull light on
the early years

Here are two of the many new Elvis books issued to coincide with the twentieth anniversary of Elvis Presley's death: one by a man who never got paid, the other by a woman who never got laid. The first, written in the third person by a journalist, is sordid with error and deadly dull; the second, written, and then written again and again by a non-writer without the help of a ghost, is frank and full of life — if also, at times, deadly dull.

Scotty Moore was a 22-year-old Memphis guitar player when, in July 1954, he met Elvis Presley, and a few days later played guitar on his first record, *That's All Right*. Little more than two years later, Moore, along

THAT'S ALRIGHT, ELVIS

The Untold Story of Elvis's First Guitarist and Manager, Scotty Moore

By Scotty Moore as told to James Dickerson
DWA, £9.99
ISBN 1 90526 038

ELVIS: IN THE TWILIGHT OF MEMORY

By June Juanico
Little Brown, £15.99
ISBN 0 316 63667 2

with bassist Bill Black and drummer D.J. Fontana, were backing Presley on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, the highest-rated television programme in the United States. For a total of three performances, Presley received \$50,000. Moore, who was still paying for the guitar and amplifier the nation watched him playing, received \$234. In 14 years of work with Presley, either on salary or more or less, on call, Moore made just over \$30,000; he is poor today. Thus his book's title: that's alright, Elvis, you're forgiven. Otherwise it is a tale of the small-time: various marriages, seemingly forgotten children, random affairs, successes and failures, recognition and remember-whens.

June Juanico was 17, and living in Biloxi, Mississippi, when, in May 1955, she met Elvis Presley: she had her first date with him that night, and stayed out until six in the morning. The next year they began a love affair that lasted until March 1957. During that time Juanico became close to Elvis's mother, Gladys, or "Love", and with Elvis regularly engaged in kissing, shooting, amusement park visits, loveovers, fooling around, food fights, firework battles, horseback riding, the



Playing records at June Juanico's house in Biloxi: that summer was so hot that even Elvis was peeling

purchase of new cars, water-skiing, BB gun shooting, and deep-sea fishing but not, as readers of Peter Guralnick's nearly definitive *Last Train from Memphis: the Rise of Elvis Presley* know, actual sexual intercourse. Which raises a question Scotty Moore and James Dickerson don't have to face: how is Juanico going to keep the suspense going?

She presents two people, herself and Elvis, who seem made of flesh and blood. "What are you in the mood for?" she asks on their first date. "I can't answer that, June, you'd slap my face," he says. "Okay," she says. "What else are you in the mood for?"

"I don't care who you are, June!" he screams at her a year later. "I don't have to take his shit," she says to a friend. Both of them are too gorgeous to live in some sense, they seem so in awe of each other the chaste beds they shared seem almost inevitable. But here is the

"almost", the good part, and there's nothing like it in any other Elvis book, and few endings like it in any other sex story. They're in a Biloxi hotel with his parents next door.

"It's too early to get up, baby; everybody's still sleeping," he said, pulling me back to the bed. He started tickling me, and put his hand over my mouth several times because I was making too much noise. We started kissing, and all of a sudden my laughter stopped. I had, almost without realizing, let all my defenses down; but after all I was going to be his wife someday. . . . I raised my hips, making it easy for him to remove my briefs. . . . We had made love, in our own special way, every time we were together but this was the first time we actually came close to physically having sex. Elvis was slowly and gently beginning to enter me when we heard a "tap tap tap" at the door.

"I was so startled I felt like my heart had stopped. He rolled off me and sat straight up in bed. "Who is it?" Elvis yelled, after making sure I was covered. The unlocked door opened; it was Love.

"I heard all the laughing in here, and then I didn't hear anything but quiet. I just wanted to tell you that maybe we should get June something to keep her from having too many babies," Love said. There's no moment half as real in *That's Alright, Elvis*. Without the usual first-person of an as-told-to, Moore disappears from his own story; at most, surrounded by the comments, many of them taken from other sources, of his one-time colleagues, associates, family members, and friends, not to mention ex-wives, he's just another character. He rarely speaks; even when he does, there's no sense of his voice, or a unique presence. Dickerson strands Moore in the sea of the ghost

writer's own ignorance, where song publisher Freddie Bienstock becomes "Freddie Bienstalk" (OK if his first name were Jack but . . .), and producer Robert "Bumps" Blackwell turns into songwriter Otis Blackwell. Dickerson is an abominable writer. He tries to describe Moore's guitar playing as counterpoint to Elvis's singing: "His guitar became the anti-Elvis component of the music." "She had a really bad feeling about the plane," Dickerson says at one point. "She was afraid something bad was going to happen." One usually comes with the other.

In its most vivid, rough-housing passages, June Juanico's book succeeds because it need not be about Elvis Presley at all; it's a strong story that, without Elvis Presley in it, no one would have published. Scotty Moore's book was a sure thing and, once again, he's come up with the short end of the stick.

Life:

Proud and

Books in The Directory on Saturday: Melvyn Bragg reviews Alan Bennett; Erica Wagner on the new Carol Shields; Jason Cowley on Christopher Hope

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Fending off the Lynch mob

Sean French

LYNCH ON LYNCH
Edited by Chris Rodley
Faber, £15.99
ISBN 0 571 18332 2

You remember moments from David Lynch's films the way you remember images from your dreams: a severed ear in the grass from *Blue Velvet*, a lady carrying a log and a dead young girl wrapped in plastic from *Twin Peaks* and scenes from *Eraserhead* and *Wild at Heart* that you might wish you could forget. Yet the oddest aspect of Lynch's best work is its normality. *Eraserhead* may look like your worst nightmare, but it is also a fable about parenthood; *Blue Velvet* is about voyeurism, perversion and ghoulish violence, yet it is a coming-of-age story. And who else could have made of *The Elephant Man* a tale of beauty and goodness?

Everybody who meets Lynch is taken back by his air of clean-cut normality, even when discussing his portrayals of the darkest extremes of human behaviour. Mel Brooks, who produced *The Elephant Man*, described him as "James Stewart from Mars". Lynch has always been reluctant to explain his work, but he is eloquent about where it came from and much of the most interesting sections of this book-length interview are those dealing with his youth and his unique early career. The decade that Lynch identifies with is the Fifties, the



Weird at heart: Lynch — a victim of self-parody?

time of American optimism, of the nuclear family and nuclear testing. He grew up in small towns like those in *Blue Velvet* and *Twin Peaks* — many of them, since his family moved around a lot. He was almost absurdly successful as a boy. He became one of the top Boy Scouts in the country and was rewarded by being made an usher at the inauguration of

John Kennedy. In these interviews he speaks glowingly of the era, rock'n'roll, the gaudy cars, but he is equally attracted to the dark side of these giant, filmed automobiles: "Old cars would weather a crash but the people inside would just be like, you know, mutilated!"

The beginning of Lynch's career was extraordinary. He

spent five isolated years making *Eraserhead* in which his only source of income was a paper round. Many people loathed *Eraserhead*, but he was hired to direct *The Elephant Man* on the strength of it and instantly became one of the most respected directors in the world. Ten years on, *Blue Velvet* still looks like a masterpiece.

Lynch is not the most sparkling interviewer, but there is a mass of intrigue here. As someone who spent many hours trying to make sense of *Twin Peaks*, I was chagrined to discover that the principal villain, Killer Bob, was played by the set dresser whom Lynch hired on the spot. The plot was never really meant to fit together. Now he tells us.

With *Wild at Heart* and then *Fire Walk With Me*, the truly dire "prequel" to *Twin Peaks*, Lynch's career began a precipitous decline. We can only hope for better things from his impending movie, *Lost Highway*, though Chris Rodley doesn't display much enthusiasm for it.

Like many directors, David Lynch has become a victim of those who acclaimed him, as his films seem to become increasingly coarse in their attempts to be "Lynch-like". His early films entrancingly showed the tension between normality and weirdness. The later films showed us the weirdness of weird people, which is less of a revelation. Still, according to the interviews, he enjoys his painting, so that's something.

First class stamp of approval

Bel Mooney

FOUR LETTERS OF LOVE
By Niall Williams
Picador, £12.99
ISBN 0 330 32667 7

OCCASIONALLY you have the great good fortune to read a novel which you devour as if it were a thriller, want to last forever because each sentence sings, but finally put down with great whoops of joy — a novel which flies freely above the common run of meretricious fiction like a bird over the crowd. That the book in question here is a first novel makes Niall Williams' achievement all the more extraordinary. If *Four Letters of Love* does not win a major literary prize there is no justice in the Universe. But there is. And so it will.

Four Letters of Love is a love story of exquisite slowness — a chronicle of how two separate lives move towards their destiny as surely as the *Titanic* and the iceberg floated on the fasted course. Yet with no tragic consequences. The narrator, Nicholas Coughlan, is 12 when his life is overturned by his father's conviction, that God has told him to give up his steady job and paint. Nicholas's mother falls apart; the family is wrecked. At the same time, elsewhere in Ireland, Isabel Gore sees her younger brother's life ruined by a mysterious seizure, for which she feels secretly responsible. Later, while still a schoolgirl, she hitches recklessly into a damaging affair. Acts of God, acts of fate or evidence of the cruel randomness of the Universe? Whatever, these events shape the lives of Nicholas and Isabel, bruising them and creating them

(in fact) for each other — although there is nothing pat or simple about Niall Williams' narrative. On the contrary, it unfolds with lyrical grace, tantalising the reader all through with the possibility that events may not, after all, work out in the way that is foretold.

His cadences are those of Irish myth and song, as well as the inheritance of Synge and Yeats. Nicholas Coughlan tells his story in the first person, and acts as an omniscient, omniscient narrator for Isabel's, a device which inspires a subconscious confidence that all will be well in the end. Otherwise how would he know?

It is interesting to compare *Four Letters of Love* with *Fugitive Pieces* by Anne Michaels. Both use interlocking stories to approach great themes, both employ a heightened, poetic prose; yet one sacrifices the purity of its purpose on the altar of style. *Four Letters of Love* rolls with courage and clarity towards a breathtaking affirmation of magic, miracles and the power of human love. Read it, and believe in love.

Admiral Sir Jock Slater, First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, salutes the author of a definitive book on the history of the Navy

Bow to the sailors of the centuries

Nicholas Rodger is one of Britain's foremost naval historians and *The Safeguard of the Sea: A Naval History of Britain* is a splendid book. It combines impressively detailed research with breadth of perception. Moreover, in *The Safeguard of the Sea*, Rodger packs his paragraphs with particulars and new anecdotes which draw the reader vividly from page to page. Like all good books it is enjoyable at many levels: as a whole book on the naval history of Britain; as individual chapters on varied subjects such as the social history of the operations of the Navy; or with its many appendices and excellent index, as a work of reference. There is humour too, even very witty comments on some of the many works to which he refers: though calling the hanging of Edward Doughty "an acute crisis of authority" may be a bit much for even the most uncritical of Drake's fans.

THE SAFEGUARD OF THE SEA
By Nicholas Rodger
Norton, £20
ISBN 0 393 04579

The quality of this book is all the more significant for, strange as it may seem for a nation where the sea has profoundly affected their lives down to the present day, no similar history has apparently been attempted since William Laird Clowes edited *The Royal Navy: A History from the earliest times to 1900*. Laird Clowes wrote his seven-volume history between 1897 and 1903 with the help of distin-

guished authors like Mahan, Theodore Roosevelt and Carr Laughton. It has stood the test of time and has recently been reprinted. By contrast, *The Safeguard of the Sea*, which is the first of three volumes, is a one-man labour of loving scholarship. Like Laird Clowes's volumes, Rodger's new history is based on printed sources but it is supplemented, as the author modestly writes, by primary research. The copious footnotes and lengthy bibliography reveal just how mod-



An 18th-century engraving of an Armada tapestry

est a statement this is from a former Assistant Keeper at the Public Record Office, who has packed the first volume with new information and fresh research. It

is our good fortune that the National Maritime Museum, the Society for Nautical Research and the Navy Records Society had the vision to apply the late Dr R.C. Anderson's legacy to this work and choose Rodger as the author. He has prepared an admirable historical record that will be read and reread in the years ahead.

Safeguard has four main layers covering: policy, strategy and naval operations; administration and logistics, including technical and

industrial support; social history; and the material aspects of navies, ships and weapons. However, it is not a book about battles and admirals; rather Rodger emphasises that navies have many functions in peace and war short of actual battle. Perhaps surprisingly, the English learnt as long ago as the 10th century that by ravaging the coast, or rather by threatening to do so, they could influence distant events on the mainland of Europe by what today is called littoral warfare.

There is much to be learnt or re-learned in this book: from the opportunity that a career at sea has always given to young people to the old truth of that sublime phrase that "it is on the Navy — under the providence of God —

that the safety, honour and welfare of the Realm do chiefly depend". He discusses further examples of what today are called Public Private Partnerships and the dependency of the Navy — and the Army also for that matter — on the Merchant fleet and ships taken up from trade. There are modern lessons too: a navy has to earn and retain public support and understanding. An island nation must work to encourage its people to take a close interest in maritime affairs. This remarkable book is a major contribution to that process and I strongly recommend it to you with a quotation from Rodger himself: "... sea power cannot be improvised. In every age and in every circumstance, the successful navies have been those which rested on long years of steady investment in the infrastructure essential to keep running the complex and delicate machinery of seagoing fleet..."

Life: A User's Handbook

Stephen

Jay Gould

on an author
with a lust
for life

The very nature of this project — to write a one-volume history of life — can only recall Dr Johnson's overquoted comment about a dog walking on two legs (he made the remark in analogy to women preachers, but we tend to suppress this part of the citation these days): namely, that the issue rests not upon our judgment of whether it is done well, but on our surprise that it can be done at all.

How can this most complex and rambling of all conceivable narratives be told? We immediately encounter the key problem of self-reference. All biographies of life can only be unauthorised, but all must have authors. There is no "correct" or "best" way to organise such a narrative (though every individual factual claim must be true or false), and an enlightening scheme for one person will be another's incomprehensible disaster. Any biographer can only proceed by his own best judgment, and therefore within his biases.

We can say, at least, that the conventional style of narrative records the worst bias of all, one that Fortey largely eschews: the organisation of the tale (to use the sexist euphony of past practice) as a "march from monad to man". That is, one begins with the primordial 3,500 million-year-old bacterium and moves on to multicellularity, to invertebrates, to fishes, reptiles (with an obligatory chapter on dinosaurs), mammals and a crowning account of human evolution. The absurdity of this procedure becomes clear when we refocus our perspective on all of life's diversity (the supposed object of life's biography after all), and recognise that those bacteria have always dominated the Earth's biota, still do, and always will (see *Nature*, for a development of this argument).

By what rationale can we justify a focus on one funny little accidental lineage among so many millions as a summation or model for the entire history of life? Human beings represent one species among 4,000 mammals. All the vertebrates include only some 20,000 species compared with nearly a million named species of insects. And even insects pale before those bacteria. The human lineage may represent the history of greatest neurological complexity, but the siphonophore lineage represents the acme of colonial construction, and some lineage of "lowly" parasites represents the most complex



Holding the key to life in your fingertips? The 40 million-year-old relative of today's praying mantis, trapped for eternity in a piece of amber

LIFE: AN UNAUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY
By Richard Fortey
HarperCollins, £25
ISBN 0 00 255 1284

and multifaceted life cycle. No single tendency, and no maximisation, of any one thing, can serve as a surrogate for the whole — that is, for the history of life.

To escape this trap of convention, Fortey uses chronology itself, rather than runs on a ladder of progress, as the organising theme of his narrative. Since time is the matrix of history, and since time (at least in the psychology of human perception) unfolds as a unidirectional flow, temporal sequence becomes an obvious first choice. Curators of artists' retrospectives, for example, often toy with other schemes for organising a creative life, but good old strictly-chronological ontogeny — from the first scribbles of youthful juvenilia to the contemplative products of hoary wisdom — simply can't be beat as a source of insight and order, as the chronological sequence in the Picasso Museum in Paris or the Turner wing at the Tate so

well illustrate. Fortey's strict chronological ordering of chapters establishes a narrative context for the book's two most favourable features. First, Fortey does discuss all the major groups — including plants and marine vertebrates, even after fancy terrestrial vertebrates had evolved — for each period of time (conventional emphases do begin to win out, however, as dinosaurs and humans grab ever more space to crowd out the far more prominent beetles and bacteria — but at least these "lowly" forms never disappear entirely, as they usually do in our books and museums, though never at our picnics or in our guts). By considering all contemporary groups together, Fortey can also stress ecological interactions and correlations with geological events, another theme sorely underplayed in most conventional accounts. Secondly, Fortey deftly interweaves three themes for each of his times: palaeontological facts, relevant evolutionary theories and historical accounts (often refreshingly humorous and sociologically informed) of how we came by this knowledge. I must also mention one general criticism: a minor carping indeed amidst such excellence. Writ-

ing about natural history presents one cardinal pitfall and Fortey does tend to fall in. Nature really is gorgeous and sublime in the most Burkean sense. But only poets can capture all this in words; when most of us try, we lapse into parodic writing suited only to travel magazines. Fortey is a fine writer, but not a literary stylist. Most of us should keep the true romance of field work silently in our souls and not write such Forteyan perorations as: "The starlight is so strong, it can even make shadows... In the bush, night insects buzz incessantly in the trees. From time to time a dingo yelps strangely in the far distance."

Also, and of absolutely no importance whatsoever (for we all make typographic howlers from time to time), but merely to share a chuckle, I did enjoy this epitome of the passage from Baroque to Classical composition: "harpisichord continuous mostly disappeared".



Not such a struggle: Lord Irwin takes tea, 1931

ence campaign in return for the Viceroy prohibiting alcohol, cutting Civil Service pay, permitting civilians to carry arms and other harebrained schemes.

Read and Fisher jog through the history of Indian independence with no great

aspiration and no new material, but their story has the merits of comprehensiveness and accuracy. They also attempt to place events in their contexts. They do not forget that riots preceded the Amritsar massacre of 1919, or that when the Congress Party

dilemma of the OED: how can the branching history of a word be conveyed in a linear list? The OED ranks major branches by number, and orders the numbers by strict chronology — a device close to Fortey's solution for all of life. But the result is an historical encyclopaedia, not a true dictionary at all, for chronology cannot be normative.) Is there another way (that could be tried experimentally)? Perhaps we could proceed group by group (but eschewing conventional ranks on a chain of being), rather than time by time, with each group ordered by chronology. We might then be able to tell better stories along genealogical lines, but how then could we render ecological interaction? I don't know the answer to this vital question, which engages such key issues as the nature of history and the limits of human mentality. But we must keep searching for novel schemes to order our narratives. There must be so many more things in earthly life than have ever been dreamt of in all our constrained philosophy.

Stephen Jay Gould's *Questioning the Millennium* is published by Cape in November

gained power in provincial legislatures 20 years later the British governors often found themselves having to restrain their Indian ministers from firing on rioters: "Why don't they shoot sooner?" was the question one governor was constantly asked by his premier.

ONLY a brief epitome covers the events of partition, following the independence celebrations in 1947. This is as well, for in many ways the story of partition cannot be told as an objective narrative. Rather it is 11 million individual tragedies, when in a few months more terrible things were done than had taken place in the preceding 200 years of British hegemony.

Jad Adams's *Dynasty: The Nehru-Gandhi Story* (with Phillip Whitehead) was published in July by Penguin/BBC

Schottland über Alles

ALMOST alone, Allan Massie has for 20 years kept Scottish letters alive, writing novels, studies, plays, reviews and vast reams of journalism. With his noble novel, the man who gave us *The Ragged Lion*, a much lauded but little read fictional recreation of the life of Sir Walter Scott, confirms his claim as Scott's successor.

There is little sex in this. Massie's fourteenth novel, and no swearing or puerile angst. It simply sings.

Alec Allan, the narrator, is the son of an haute bourgeoisie Scots family which, thanks to a millionaire shipbuilder of a great-grandfather, has exchanged the East End of Glasgow for Eton, and

Loyalties and The Sins of the Fathers. But here he goes further. His sense of history, intelligent, perceptive and unrivalled in living novelists, is here more mellow and mature. He uses Alec's siblings — one a diplomat communist and closet homosexual, another a follower of Mosley, a third a black sheep rubber-planter in the East — to weave a web of a fading family and dying empire.

Massie examines why we lost our Empire and our will, and, in so doing, he paints a paradigm for our times. This novel becomes "the anatomy of a moral failure". Then, as now, why have we developed "a disinclination to look reality in the face"? We have our sybaritic supurbes, but the generation of Alec Allan's father, empire-builders, still preferred Plato and his ideal world to Thucydides's that was all too real.

Beautifully written this novel of manners sears and shines. It is both elegy for things that were and eulogy for those that might yet be. Its message demands patience in a hurried age. The wax is different, but now, as 60 years ago, we prefer to stop our cars and, in new cacophony, press on regardless to the waiting rocks.

Ross Leckie
SHADOWS OF EMPIRE
By Allan Massie
Sinclair-Stevenson,
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Proud and prejudiced

Jad Adams

THE PROUDEST DAY

India's Long Road to Independence

By Anthony Read and David Fisher
Jonathan Cape, £20.00
ISBN 0 224 04563

Palace in Delhi. It began: "Liberty will not descend to a people, a people must raise themselves to liberty."

What was seen as a civilising crusade was the clearly stated intention of the liberal-minded sections of British opinion. Whenever they had power they made advances in granting Indian demands, making the final goal of

independence inevitable. The book is thus an antidote to too romantic a view of the "freedom struggle". It shows how steeped in orthodox Hinduism were many of the independence wallahs, making them more Hindu nationalists than Indian nationalists. The prophet of independence, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, first hoisted the banner of opposition to British rule when he attacked the Age of Consent Act which raised the age of intercourse from 10 to 12 and introduced after a child bride had died from sexual injuries. Such interference with religious freedom had to be fought to the last gasp.

The authors also show what a self-righteous character Gandhi was. At one point he offered to call off the indepen-

dence campaign in return for the Viceroy prohibiting alcohol, cutting Civil Service pay, permitting civilians to carry arms and other harebrained schemes.

Read and Fisher jog through the history of Indian independence with no great

aspiration and no new material, but their story has the merits of comprehensiveness and accuracy. They also attempt to place events in their contexts. They do not forget that riots preceded the Amritsar massacre of 1919, or that when the Congress Party

THIS is not a book which will go down well in Delhi, where they tend to believe independence was wrested from a cruel imperial power. The view presented here is that Indian independence was the culmination of half a century of increasingly democratic reforms imposed by the British, with Indian nationalists always justifiably demanding more, until complete independence was achieved in 1950 (India gained dominion status in 1947).

The title refers to a speech by Macaulay who told Parliament in 1833 that the complete Europeanisation of India would be "the proudest day in English history". The imperial mission statement was carved in stone some 100 years later, on the gateway to the Viceroy's

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■ **CRETE** for £200 for a fortnight's B&B, flying from Luton on August 21, is on offer from Lunn Poly. Details from the company's Holiday Shops.

■ **SOLOS** is offering a week in Hungary at a hotel on Lake Balaton with several leisure facilities. Price from £490 a person, including half board and a return flight from Heathrow on August 23. Details: 0181-951 2800.

■ **FLORIDA** for a fortnight's self-drive holiday for £300 a

person, a £58 saving, with a flight from Manchester to Sanford, Orlando, on August 23, is available from Unijet. Details: 0990 336336.

■ **RHODES** for £409 a person for two weeks' self-catering with a flight from Newcastle on August 23 is on offer from Kosmar Holidays. Details: 0181-368 6833.

■ **COSTA BRAVA** for two weeks' self-catering with flights from Manchester, Birmingham or Teesside on August 25 is available from £245 a person, based on four sharing, from Last Stop Holiday Shop. Details: 0541 503400.

■ **PATTAYA** beach resort, Thailand, for £599 for a fortnight's room-only accommodation with daily flights from Heathrow until August 31, is available from Hayes & Jarvis. Details: 0181-222 7822.

■ **SUMMER CAMP** at a saving from August 30 is on offer from Superchoice. Prices for multi-activity holidays for seven to 16-year-olds on the Isle of Wight now cost from £227. Details: 01273 691100.

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■ **IRISH** Ferries Holidays has self-catering cottages available in Co Clare from August 23. Prices start at £133 a person for seven nights, based on four travelling, including return ferry with car. Details: 0990 170000.

■ **STENA** Line has launched its winter ski-drive brochure with £50 discounts off certain self-catering properties booked by October 18. Prices for a week's holiday start at £37 a person, including return ferry for two cars. Details: 0990 747474.

■ **LATE** availability holidays with Scandinavian Seaways include a four-night Legoland and West Coast holiday in Denmark for £203 a person (£158 a child) departing Harwich on August 18. Details: 0990 333111.



Short breaks, with the chance to catch salmon on the River Sheen before the season's end, are on offer in September at the five-star Sheen Falls Lodge, Kenmare, Co Kerry, from £220 a person, including two nights' B&B and one dinner. Flights extra. Details: 00 353 64 41600

FLIGHTS

AIR Canada has business class excursions costing one third the normal price. Flights to Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver cost £1,199. Those to St John's and Halifax are priced at £879. Book 14 days ahead and travel by September 9. Details: 0990 247226.

■ **SINGAPORE** Airlines has cut-price £385 excursion fares to both its home town (Singapore) plus Penang and Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia. Details: 0171-938 3939.

■ **DURING** September, Campus Travel has £349 return student flights to Mexico City out of Gatwick. Details: 0171-730 8111.

■ **LUPUS** Travel has bargain peak season flights to Italy departing Gatwick, Milan, for example, costs £129, Verona and Venice £159, Rome £169 and Palermo £199. Details: 0171-306 3000.

■ **IRISH** airline City Jet (which flies from London City) has fly-drive deals with Budget on arrival in Dublin. Daily rates for a small car start at £41. Details: 0345 445588.

HOTELS

THE Montain Hotel, at Marble Arch in London, has a special rate next month of £195 a night for two people, including breakfast, VAT and car parking. In addition, guests staying in September can reserve two nights for the price of one during January 1998, ideal for the winter sales. Details: 0171-402 4288.

■ **ROOKERY** Hall Hotel at Worleston, Cheshire, has a two-night break available this month for £160 a person, including dinner, with a third night (£83) only available free. Details: 01270 610016.

■ **A 15 per cent discount** off the normal rate of £165 a room a night is available at the Pembroke Court Hotel in London's Notting Hill Gate over the Bank Holiday weekend when the carnival takes place. For carnivalgoers, a free whistle is included in the price. Details: 0171-229 9977.

■ **CARLTON** hotels in The Hague and Utrecht have six-night offers for the next couple of weeks, through World End Travel, including car ferry from Dover to Calais. Cost is

£279 a person, based on double occupancy, with children free if sharing their parents' room. A pass for local attractions is included. Details: 01582 733550.

■ **THE Mandarin Oriental Hotel** in Hong Kong has a "summer interlude" offer available through Leading Hotels of the World until September 15 at HK\$2180 (about £167) a room a night, including fruit and flowers on arrival, use of the health club and a late checkout. Details: 0800 181213.

■ **A TWO-NIGHT** break this month at the four-star Richmond Gate Hotel, close to Richmond Park in southwest London, costs £99 a person based on two sharing. The offer, through Sunvil UK, includes full English breakfast and use of the leisure facilities. Details: 0181-232 9788.

■ **THISTLE** Hotels has bank holiday bargains at 69 of its UK hotels (excluding London), including £113 a person for three nights half board at the Northumbria Hotel in Newcastle. Details: 0800 332244.

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Cheaper cruises on the horizon

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

ONE OF Britain's fastest-growing holiday companies claims it can bring down the cost of cruising from British ports by more than 50 per cent by cutting out travel agents.

Direct Holidays has chartered a 34-year-old, 33,000-tonne liner, renamed her the *Edinburgh Castle* and plans to run a programme of 15 cruises a year from Liverpool and Greenock from next April.

Duncan Wilson, director of Direct Cruises, said that although prices for cruises from Mediterranean ports had fallen sharply since Thomson and Airtours moved into the market, prices for UK-based cruises were still far too high.

"One of the main reasons is that travel agents get up to 28 per cent commission when they sell a cruise," he says. "We sell direct, so at a stroke we can dramatically cut the costs. A cruise on a P&O ship which would cost £2,000 would be instantly £500 cheaper by missing out the travel agent. And when we use our size and efficiency we can get it even lower."

The *Edinburgh Castle* was originally the *Eugenia Costa* and, along with the best equipped three-star liners in the world. She is now undergoing extensive refurbishment in Genoa and will be brought to Britain in time for next year's peak season.

Direct Holidays claims that the ship will be able to offer top quality service comparable to that provided by P&O on the soon-to-be-scrapped *Cinberra*.

Once the *Edinburgh Castle* is fully operational she will visit 44 different ports throughout the Mediterranean and the Canaries, and sail north to such newly popular destinations as Greenland and the Faeroe Isles.

Hot prices and cold-climate hols

Families pay more for late breaks

By TONY DAWE

FAMILIES searching for a package deal before the school holidays end in three weeks can still find a variety of places in the Mediterranean and the Canary Isles at a price.

A survey of travel agents reveals that families with two children will have to pay at least £1,250 and possibly as much as £2,000 for a fortnight's holiday in late August.

A couple of smaller travel agents in London and Manchester had nothing for the next three weeks while several others could only offer holidays beginning next Thursday or Friday, which could eat into term time.

However, the picture is slightly brighter for would-be holidaymakers than the industry has painted. Tour operators had predicted that little would be available at the last minute because of a rush of bookings brought on by building society windfalls and poor weather in June.

"It's tight for late August but families will still be able to find holidays if they are flexible and don't expect bargains," said Tony Bennett, managing director of Going Places, a high street agency.

The survey found that the best selection of late August packages were available in Glasgow and Newcastle. Both Going Places and Wallace Arnold Travel in Glasgow were able to offer family breaks at short notice for the last two weeks in August, but all were expensive compared with previous years.

Destinations included Corfu, the Costa del Sol, Majorca and Malta. A holiday in the Costa del Sol in a self-catering apartment, to be allocated on arrival, for two adults and two young children started at £329 an adult.

At A T Mays in Newcastle,

Thomson Square Deal packages to Ibiza and Gran Canaria for a fortnight's self-catering were available for £1,536 for a family with children of secondary-school age, including flights from the city's airport on Monday.

More attractively priced deals to Rhodes for £1,396 and Turkey for £1,256, both starting next Wednesday, were also on offer provided families were prepared to travel to Manchester and Teesside airports respectively.

The Edward Mellor Holiday Shop in Stockport offered various packages from Manchester airport for the next two weeks but most were expensive. Self-catering in two-star apartments in Samos, Greece, will cost £1,936 for a family with two school-age children and three-star self-catering in Ibiza will cost £2,096.

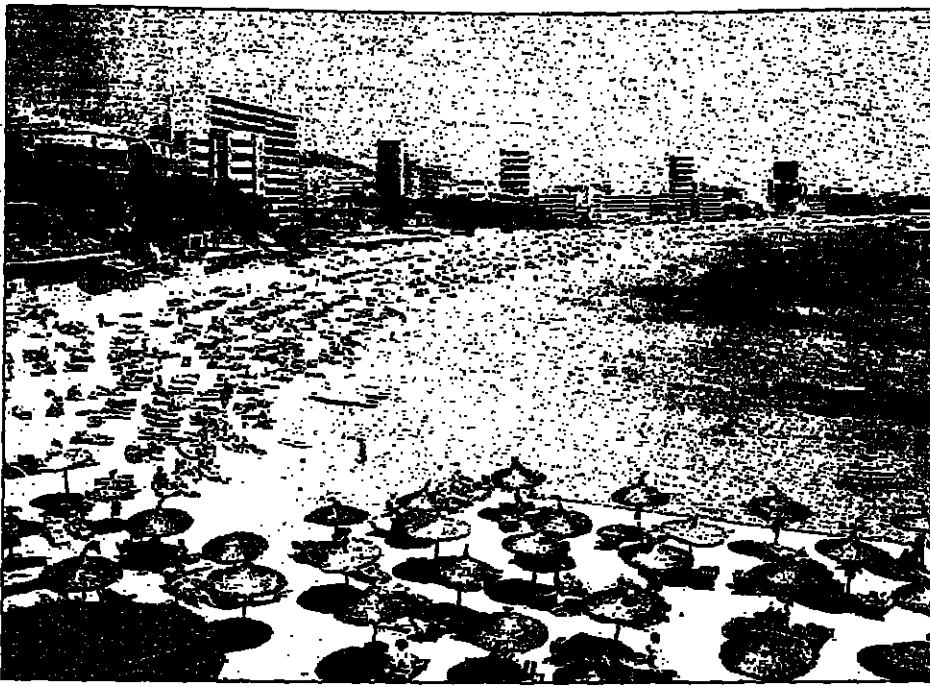
At Bowen Travel, Wolverhampton, Caroline Haywood, the manager, said: "If people really want to get away while the children are off school, they will pay the price."

At Eton Travel Agency in Wokingham, Berkshire, nothing was available for families before next Friday when a fortnight's half-board in a hotel in Majorca would cost a family with two children between £1,300 and £1,400.

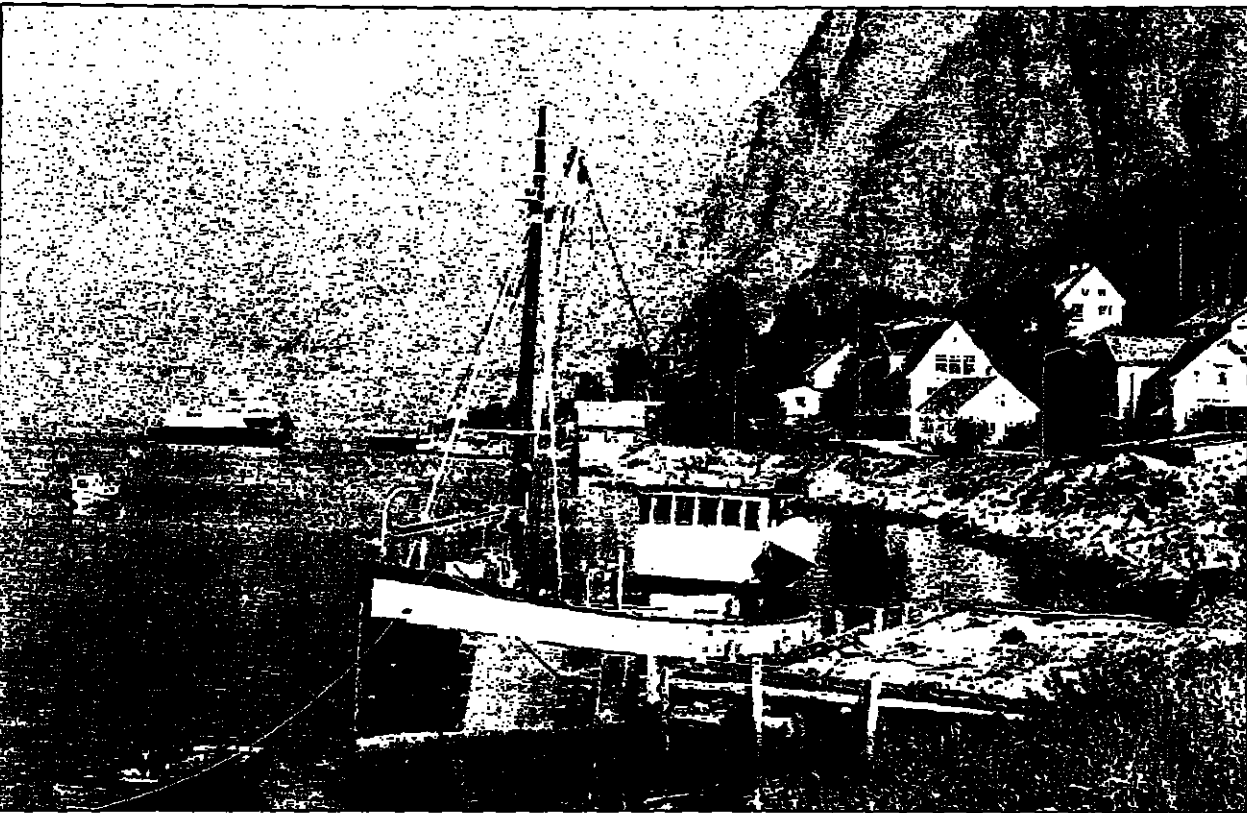
Southern Travel in Dorking, Surrey, could offer only a week's half-board in Majorca from August 23 for £1,716 with a flight from Gatwick.

At Lunn Poly, Cardiff, no packages were available from the city's airport until next Wednesday when a fortnight's bed and breakfast accommodation in Rhodes would cost a family of four £1,396.

The agent's Bristol shop said: "All-inclusive accommodation is impossible for the remainder of the holidays."



Magaluf beach, Majorca: breaks are available at short notice but are expensive



The fjords of Norway and other cool attractions are luring British tourists away from traditionally popular hotspots

The cool north is cashing in

By CATHERINE CHIETWYND

AS BRITISH summers become hotter, holidaymakers are seeking to escape, rather than find, the sun. Thousands now head either for the cool of the mountains or the icecaps of the north, rather than the heat of the south.

For them, the Alps, Scandinavia and even the Arctic Circle are starting to take precedence over traditional haunts such as the Greek islands, the South of France and Italy. Mike Rigby, regional manager UK and Ireland for Braathens, the Norwegian airline, says that even in July bookings were up 16 per cent on last year.

Tour operators have also been noticing unexpected demand. Colin Trigger, managing director of Scantours, the specialist operator to Scandinavia, says evidence that Britons are wanting to move northwards, away from the heat, is strong.

"Traditionally," he says, "the market for Norway and northern Europe is dead by August. This year we are taking a lot of bookings every day and there is a big difference. We are seeing interest at February levels."

There have also been inquiries about Iceland and Spitzbergen because of its nearness to the North Pole.

Mr Trigger says that Scandinavia is well suited to changes in holidaymakers' requirements as tourists become more adventurous and more restless, spending an average of three nights in an area, then moving to another, and often seeking less obvious destinations. "Certainly," he adds, "we are bowling along in August, when we would normally expect to be dealing only with city-break bookings, not package arrangements."

Christine Ball of Travelscene says that despite the stronger pound, sterling packages to Scandinavia and Iceland are not the cheapest, and it can be expensive once you get there. "Despite that," she says, "these destinations remain popular, and we have had interest in late bookings."

This is also true of Saga Holidays, whose cruises to the Arctic are now booked solid. Because packages are aimed at older travellers, bookings are usually made well in advance. But a spokeswoman says: "We have had a number of late bookings to cooler areas such as Scandinavia and the Alps."

Jellyfish sting English swimmers

By NICK NUTTALL



Compass jellyfish: Beware my sting

MILLIONS of stinging jellyfish that have drifted towards packed beaches this summer have prompted safety experts to warn bathers to take special care during the hot weather.

Scores of people swimming off East Anglia have been stung by large numbers of compass jellyfish, so called because of their chocolate, V-shaped markings which ancient mariners thought resembled those on a ship's compass. The creatures have been making people sick for up to 48 hours, and a few victims have been taken to hospital.

The compass, *Chrysaora hyscellosa*, is common in the Atlantic, North Sea and the Channel. But numbers off the East Coast have been exceptional this summer. Bernie Gray, a beachguard at Gorleston-on-Sea, near Great Yarmouth, says: "I have never seen as many as I have here in the past three weeks."

Dr Paul Cornelius, head of the

Guidaria (relating to certain invertebrates characterised by having stinging structures) research programme at the Natural History Museum, said there were several species of jellyfish around the British Isles, some of which sting, some of which are harmless. Even the compass can be unpredictable, with some being stingers and others not.

Few British jellyfish are really dangerous, but even mild stings can be sensitive to bee, hornet or wasp stings. A jellyfish sting can trigger a condition known as anaphylactic shock, which causes breathing difficulties and boil-like rashes.

The lion's mane, *Cyanea capillata*, can be found from the Bristol Channel, up to the West Coast of Scotland and down to East Anglia. It has a reddish tinge and is about 8in across, with thousands of fine tentacles. "It stings like a nettle, but some people experience a far worse reaction," Dr Cornelius says.

The moon jellyfish, *Aurelia aurita*, has four magenta hoops and is generally harmless.

Related to the lion's mane is *Cyanea lamarckii*. It is smaller and blue in colour and "stings very gently". It is found in the same range as the lion's mane, as is the harmless football jellyfish, *Rhizostoma pulmo*, an off-white variety that swims under the surface and can weigh up to 30kg.

One of the most fearsome, but rarely sighted, creatures is the Portuguese man-of-war — not a jellyfish at all, but a colony of small creatures with huge numbers of tentacles — that from time to time pitches up from the Azores. It can measure 10in across and its sting has been known to kill on occasion.

● A tiny freshwater jellyfish, *Craspedausta sowerbii* — a non-stinging variety, with markings like a hot-cross bun — can be seen in the Thames near Teddington.

● Dr Thomas Stuttard, page 16

Imports threaten rare animals

By TONY DAWE

TOURISTS heading for exotic holiday destinations are being warned against buying souvenirs that could threaten certain wild plants and animals with extinction.

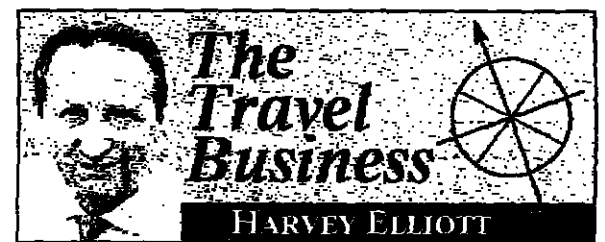
The World Wide Fund for Nature advised this week that the top ten long-haul destinations, identified by Association of British Travel Agents' surveys, all contain endangered wildlife, and that "careless purchases" could boost illegal or damaging trade in them.

The fund has produced a Buyer Beware! list to guide tourists through bazaars, markets and airport shops abroad. Top of the list is Thailand, where tourists are warned against buying live orchid plants and ivory carvings. Visitors may be prosecuted for bringing home the plants, but can buy cut flowers grown in nurseries. It says the carvings, on sale at Bangkok airport, could come from the highly endangered Asian elephant.

Tourists heading for America's Old West are told: "Do not be tempted by wall hangings displaying the feathers of wild birds. All native wild birds are protected in the United States; possessing even a feather is illegal."

It points out that failure to obtain a permit for certain snakeskin boots or lizard-skin belts could result in Customs impounding your souvenir. The fund asks tourists not to buy sea-turtle shells in The Gambia or tortoiseshell jewellery in the Caribbean. It also says that permits are required to bring home some encephalitis from Malaysia and products made from Canadian walrus tusks.

James Martin-Jones, head of conservation policy at WWF-UK, says: "As people travel further afield, they face an increasing variety of souvenirs made from endangered species. It is imperative that they do not contribute to the demise of these species by unwittingly getting caught up in the illegal wildlife trade."



Compensation lottery chaos

How much compensation will you or your relatives receive if you are injured or killed in an air crash?

Millions of people are flying around the globe with not the slightest idea of the extent of cover provided by their airline for personal injury or death.

Air accident compensation is little short of a scandal. Everything depends on which airline you fly with, which government has signed various international agreements and which route you are using.

The airlines, through the International Air Transport Association (IATA), are trying to sort things out. But there is much still to be done.

British Airways became one of the first carriers to implement an IATA-sponsored agreement to abolish legal limits on air accident compensation payments. British Midland has not signed the agreement but has implemented it. The carrier is now covered by an insurance policy providing unlimited damages.

Yet the victims of last week's Korean Airlines (KAL) crash on Guam will be limited to compensation of about £140,000 (£88,000); even though the airline agreed to abolish the limit it has not yet received government approval to do so.

To understand how this mess developed, you have to look back nearly 70 years, when, in 1929, the Warsaw Convention limited compensation to \$10,000 per passenger. This limit remained in force until 1955, when The Hague Protocol doubled it.

The United States then began worrying about airlines that might be carrying its citizens and pressed air-

lines to adopt the 1966 Montreal Agreement, which set a compensation limit of \$75,000 per person for all flights to or from America.

As the number of international airlines grew, so did the realisation that international agreements should cover other parts of the world. So, from 1969, many governments, including the UK, approved a new limit of 100,000 Special Drawing Rights — a reserve currency operated by the International Monetary Fund, equivalent to about \$140,000.

Still this was considered insufficient, particularly by the newly wealthy nations of the Far East. In 1992 Japanese airlines unilaterally waived all limits in a break-through move.

In 1995, IATA also voluntarily decided to waive the limits and wrote its own agreement, the Inter-carrier Agreement on Passenger Liability. All 256 member airlines were asked to sign. So far only 90 have done so. That agreement, however, binds airlines only to "take action to waive the limitation of liability..." and not actually to implement it. Only 55 have signed the implementation agreement.

Meanwhile, the US Government steadfastly refuses to rescind the Montreal Agreement, fearing that if it did so, American citizens who flew on airlines that have not signed up to the new one would not be covered even by the Montreal accord.

Action is urgently needed to give passengers the comfort of knowing that, in the event of a disaster, they or their relatives will be adequately and quickly compensated, whichever airline they are using.

Airlines charge for oxygen

By HARVEY ELLIOTT

A YOUNG WOMAN suffering from cystic fibrosis — a disease that makes breathing difficult — was charged £500 by Singapore Airlines to use oxygen. The charge is among the highest recorded by consumer groups and a medical charity, which have now launched a campaign to shame airlines into dropping charges for oxygen.

Many airlines charge £200 per round trip, and claim that it costs much more than that to have the equipment available on board. Some charge only a small fee; others nothing.

Helen Thomas, 24, of West London, had booked a return flight to Australia last year, well in advance. She suffers from cystic fibrosis, but the effects are slight and there was no indication that she might need oxygen.

Anne, her mother, said: "Her condition deteriorated, and she was told she would need oxygen on a flight." Singapore Airlines said she would have to pay a further £500. With everything booked and arranged, she had no option but to borrow the money and pay up.

Singapore Airlines said yesterday that its policy was to charge half the cost of a normal fare. A spokesman said: "It is not the use of the oxygen, as such, but the use of a seat. We have to secure the cylinder next to the passenger."

Don't take Disney for a ride

By DAVID CHURCHILL

DISNEYLAND is the latest victim of the growing American hobby of suing for alleged injuries or other claims.

A Californian judge last week gave the go-ahead for a legal action — which Disney is contesting — by Billie Jean Matay, a grandmother who claims that her grandchildren were traumatised when they were taken behind the scenes and saw Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck without their costume heads. The family had been taken backstage after a robbery in the car park.

This came after a similar lawsuit in which a family claimed damages for the trauma suffered by their four-year-old, who, when taken backstage, was said to have been terrified at seeing the characters without their heads because the breathing and cooling devices made

them look like skeletons. The family claimed more than \$1 million in damages, and Disney eventually agreed an out-of-court settlement, largely because the family had initially been taken backstage after having been falsely accused of shoplifting.

The Disneyland park at Anaheim, California, is estimated to receive one big lawsuit a week, with about 100 cases active at any one time. (The figures are similar for Walt Disney World, in Florida.) But David Koenig, a former Disneyland employee who monitors the court cases, says fewer than one in 20 has a chance of reaching court and winning damages.

"It's difficult to beat Disney in court," he said. "Unlike many other large corporations, it won't settle suits just to make them go away, no matter how Mickey Mouse the claims may be."



Most legal actions involve allegations of personal injury, with the Autopia car ride and Matterhorn Bobsled rollercoaster rides the source of the highest number of claims.

"Many victims orchestrate their own accident," Mr Koenig says. "They'll stage a fall, or deliberately step in front of a streetcar."

But litigious American visitors seem willing to sue for any reason, however unlikely their chances of success. One man claimed that the crowds at the afternoon parade had traumatised his family, while another parent alleged that the Winnie-the-Pooh character had hit her nine-year-old daughter in the face. The full-time Disney legal team successfully proved by bringing the character into court — that the costume's arms were too close to the ground to have caused the injury.

One legal action that succeeded in the long term was initiated by two men, Andrew Elder, 19, and Shawn Elliott, 17, who accused Disney of sexual discrimination when they were prevented from dancing together in the Video-pole arena. Eventually, Disneyland was forced to end any sexual discrimination

Hold on to your boots and baggage

By RONALD GRIBBLE

HOLIDAYMAKERS bound for walking holidays abroad are to be told to check in at Heathrow wearing their boots and to carry a change of clothing in their hand luggage. So many bags have gone missing at the airport that one tour operator is to warn its clients to take essential luggage on to the plane with them, rather than put it in the hold.

Janine Graysmark, marketing manager of London-based HF Holidays, which specialises in guided walking tours, said: "As a result of the feedback we have had from customers who have lost luggage on Heathrow to Munich flights, we are advising clients to wear their boots and

carry a change of clothing with them."

On July 26 John and Kit Adlington from Oxford flew from Heathrow for a 14-day mountain-walking holiday in Austria, only to find on arrival in Munich that their luggage had disappeared. British Airways offered them an overnight pack containing T-shirts and toothpaste. The luggage was delivered to their hotel at Mayrhofen five days later. Mr Adlington, a university lecturer, said: "Having no luggage for a week is bad enough, but when it finally did arrive the contents was wet and stained. We had to buy new

clothes and walking boots at the resort."

On August 2, 15 members of another British party arrived at Munich to discover that their luggage had also vanished. BA offered overnight bags and 250 marks (about £87) per passenger.

Bags have also been separated from passengers on flight transfers. The domino effect has caused lost-luggage chaos at Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen. A BA spokesman said that the backlog — 2,000 misplaced bags were still waiting at Heathrow to be reunited with their owners last Friday — had now been cleared. A new improved system was due to start at the airport next month.

TRAVEL ON SATURDAY

- Spain special: Leslie Thomas in Grazelema
- Mary Gold in Mauritius
- America: Sarah Anderson in New Mexico
- Jill Crawshaw's selects autumn breaks

POLAND
10 Day Holiday with Half Board
To Zakopane in the Beautiful Tatra Mountains
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CRICKET: WARWICKSHIRE SET STIFF TARGET IN NATWEST TROPHY SEMI-FINAL

Sussex reel under Hemp blitz

BY SIMON WILDE

EDGBASTON (Sussex won toss): Sussex, with eight wickets in hand, need 300 runs to beat Warwickshire

SUSSEX'S romantic run in the NatWest Trophy has been built on their ability to fulfil one improbable dream after another, but their hopes of playing Essex in the final at Lord's on September 6 appeared last night to reside well and truly in the land of make-believe.

They had remained in contention for much of a day severely disrupted by torrential rain and had light, but, in a last telling session that began with Warwickshire on 184 for two after 40.4 overs, they wilted in the heat of a ferocious assault from a team intent on a fourth 60-overs final in five years.

In the remaining 116 balls of the Warwickshire innings, 158 runs poured forth, 91 of them to an inspired David Hemp, who is now repaying his new club for his early struggles. Driving and pulling with great power, he stayed until the end, scoring 111, from 93 balls with seven fours and five sixes, to add to his match-winning century in the previous round against Middlesex.

Warwickshire finished with an imposing 342 for three, 15 more than Sussex conceded at Derby in the quarter-finals, and nor was that the end of the visitors' woes.

Given an agonising 40 minutes to bat as the shadows lengthened on a night's evening, they quickly lost Greenfield and Rao, the men responsible for their unlikely wins over Lancashire, the holders, and Derbyshire.

Greenfield was needlessly sacrificed in the first over, going for a second run and being easily beaten by Giles's throw from the deep. In Welch's second over, Rao was adjudged by umpire Ken Palmer to have been caught low down by Ostler at slip, although replays suggested otherwise.

At 12 for two, Sussex looked beyond relieve. It could scarcely have been a more disastrous two hours for them. With the exception of Jarvis, who had bowled with woeful inaccuracy earlier in the day, they had stuck to their task



Robinson, the Sussex seam bowler, makes a vain attempt to intercept an off drive for four by Moles

well in the field. Drakes and Robinson bowled with exemplary discipline and little luck — their combined figures were 24-6-72-2 — the fielding was tidy and they would not have discounted the possibility of chasing 300 to win on an excellent pitch.

Smith and Moles, both of whom made half-centuries, may have put on 130 for the first wicket but it had taken them nearly half the innings to do so. It was partnership of 142 in 22 overs between Hemp and Ostler that changed the course of events.

Sussex could not stem the flow of runs and when four catches — of varying degrees of difficulty — were put down in the space of four overs, the heart went out of their cricket. Minutes later, Hemp took 24

off an over from Khan, the leg spinner, including three sixes driven and pulled with murderous power, as Warwickshire ran riot.

Ostler weighed in with 58 at nearly a run per ball and Penney with 25 at a better rate than that as Sussex's fielding

became ragged and distracted. They knew the dream was dying.

Such excitement for the Edgbaston faithful, who numbered nearly 10,000, had seemed unlikely earlier in the day when several downpours — the one in late morning,

torrential — consigned the tie to a second day.

The key to Sussex's wins over Lancashire and Derbyshire had been that they were granted the better conditions in which to bat and this seemed likely to be the case when they won toss and chose to field.

The ball swung at times and checked the progress of Smith and Moles and with more luck for the bowlers it could have been a very different story.

While Smith fed off Jarvis's waywardness, Moles struggled to settle with his damaged hand, played and missed time and again and edged perilously short of slip. He had scrambled four runs off 34 balls before he punched his first boundary in the eleventh over.

EDGBASTON SCOREBOARD

WARWICKSHIRE	SUSSEX
A.J. Moles bow b Drakes 56	K Greenfield run out 5
M.K. Smith c Rao b K Newell 111	R Rao c Ostler b Welch 16
D.P. O'Sullivan b Drakes 58	M Newell not out 16
T. Penney not out 20	Extras (lb 1, w 1) 4
Extras (lb 5, w 11) 16	Total (2 wickets, 11 overs) 43
Total (3 wickets, 60 overs) 342	K Newell, N.R. Taylor, H.P. Moles, V.C. Drakes, P.W. Jarvis, A.A. Khan and M.A. Robinson to bat
FALL OF WICKETS: 1-130, 2-202, 3-262, 4-342	FALL OF WICKETS: 1-5, 2-12, 3-26, 4-34, 5-120, 6-120, 7-120, 8-120, 9-120, 10-120, 11-120
BOWLING: Drakes 12-5-38-2, Jarvis 10-4-78-0, Robinson 12-1-34-0, K Newell 10-0-62-1, Khan 5-0-69-0, Greenfield 8-0-64-0	BOWLING: Smith 11-5-38-2, Jarvis 10-4-78-0, Robinson 12-1-34-0, K Newell 10-0-62-1, Khan 5-0-69-0, Greenfield 8-0-64-0

India's players fined by match referee

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

EVERY member of the India team in the drawn second Test with Sri Lanka, which finished in Colombo yesterday, has been fined nearly double his match fee by the referee, John Reid, of New Zealand, because of the side's dismal over-rate.

Reid, who imposed individual fines of 27,000 rupees (about £475) said: "I am very disappointed that the India team has created a record for over-rate fines... but I am equally concerned that very little effort was made to speed up, despite them being advised daily of their position." One day, the Indians were 22 overs short of their allocation, at the time set for close of play.

Mohammad Azharuddin hit his nineteenth Test century to steer India to a draw after they had been left 373 to win in a minimum of 103 overs. The loss of two wickets in the first session, after they had resumed at 49 without loss, convinced India that a draw was their best option and they finished at 281 for five, with Azharuddin on 103.

The former India captain gave three chances during an innings in which he faced 175 balls and hit 14 fours. Muthiah Muralitharan, the off-spinner, dropped a hard return catch and the wicketkeeper, Ramesh Kaluwitharana, put down a simple catch when Azharuddin tried to cut. Sanath Jayasuriya, who later missed a caught and bowled opportunity.

It was Azharuddin's fifth-wicket partnership of 110 with the left-handed Saurav Ganguly that put the match beyond Sri Lanka, after they had begun the day in promising fashion, dismissing Navjot Singh, for 16, in the fourth over and Rahul Dravid for six soon afterwards to leave India 75 for two.

Sachin Tendulkar went cheaply and Sajeev de Silva had the dangerous Ajaya Jadesha caught in the gully for 73. But Sri Lanka had to wait another 132 minutes for their next success, when Ganguly was caught behind off Muralitharan for 45. Aravinda de Silva, who made a century in each innings, was named the man of the match and Sanath

Jayasuriya, who finished with a batting average of 190.33, was voted the man of the series.

SRI LANKA: First Innings 332 (P.A. de Silva 146; D. Mursari 103; P.A. de Silva 100). Second Innings 281 (P.A. de Silva 146; D. Mursari 103; P.A. de Silva 100). SRI LANKA: First Innings 332 (P.A. de Silva 146; D. Mursari 103; P.A. de Silva 100). Second Innings 281 (P.A. de Silva 146; D. Mursari 103; P.A. de Silva 100).

RUGBY LEAGUE

Goulding stripped of club captaincy

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

ST HELENS stripped Bobbie Goulding of the club captaincy and replaced him with Chris Joynt, his Great Britain colleague, just hours before the world club championship play-off game against Paris St-Germain last night.

The disciplinary reasons behind the decision were not specified by the club, but Goulding's surprise removal is believed to have followed incidents on the club's recent ill-starred visit to Australia and New Zealand in the world championship.

Although originally selected at scrum-half for last night's game at Knowsley Road, Goulding was expected to withdraw for personal reasons. His wife gave birth to their third child this week, but the baby has heart problems and is on a life-support machine. "This is a genuine reason and we fully understand Bobbie's wishes to be with his wife," David Howes, the St Helens chief executive, said.

In an earlier brief statement, Eric Ashton, the club chairman, said that the replacement of Goulding by Joynt would take immediate effect and that the decision had been made in consultation with Shaun McRae, the St Helens coach, who presumably supported the measure.

Goulding's career has been overshadowed by controversy and misadventure, including a walk along the roof of one coach's car. Rugby league's most frequently reformed player looked finally to have turned over a new leaf when his greater maturity was rewarded with the St Helens captaincy last season, in which he led the club to the double of Super League championship and the Challenge Cup.

This season, St Helens have not been the force they were and Goulding has been enmeshed in contractual and disciplinary problems, notably a six-match ban for a high tackle, which kept him out of the successful Challenge Cup defence until the final. At Wembley, he let Joynt receive the trophy as a deed of thanks.

Sir Rodney Walker is considering his future as chairman and director of the Rugby Football League. After yesterday's meeting of clubs to discuss issues facing the game before a meeting of the Rugby League Council on September 3, Sir Rodney revealed that he was not certain to seek re-election.

The council meeting is expected to decide on far-reaching changes to the game, including a new competition to be run with the British Amateur Rugby League Association and salary-capping. Maurice Lindsay, the RFL chief executive, said: "The clubs have decided that a salary cap is an essential part of our survival."

TENNIS

Henman digs deep to find winning touch

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

TIM HENMAN staged a remarkable escape to beat Daniel Vacek, of the Czech Republic, in the second round of the Pilot Pen International in New Haven, Connecticut. The British No.1 was a set down and 0-40 on his service at 4-4 in the second set before coming through to win 4-6, 7-6, 6-4.

His fightback, due largely to some fine serving, meant that he avoided a third successive opening-match exit as he prepares for the US Open. On his way to victory, Henman sent down one of his fastest services, which was measured at 130mph. That helped him to set up a second-set tie-break that he dominated after two early points went against service.

A break of service at the start of the third set put Henman in control of the match for the first time and he then started to return service better, find more rhythm with his groundstrokes and go to the net more often.

For much of the first two sets, the No.7 seed had opted for a conservative policy of sticking to the baseline. "After the way I have played in the last couple of weeks, I wanted to make sure I played more consistently," Henman said. "I preferred to stay back more and give myself bigger margins of error. It's good to come through a difficult match like that."

Henman will next meet Brett Steven, of New Zealand, who recorded a surprise victory against Jim Courier, of the United States.

Three weeks ago, Courier captured his 21st career title in Los Angeles but he has not won a single match since. After losing to Fabrice Santoro in Montreal and Albert Costa in Cincinnati, the former world No.1 was humbled 6-2, 6-2 by Steven.

Courier looked sluggish against the more enterprising New Zealander, who made Courier uncomfortable by serving powerfully and keeping the ball deep. Steven was also more eager to attack from the net and, although Courier scored with a few stinging passes, it was not enough to prevent Steven claiming an easy victory.

"It was a tough match," Courier said. "He played very well, served effectively and didn't make many mistakes. On my side of the coin, I made a lot of unforced errors. That was pretty much the difference."

Greg Rusedski, the British No.2, who is within three places of Henman in the world rankings at No.24, faces a second-round match today against Jeff Salzenstein, of the United States, a wild-card entry. Marc Rosset, of Switzerland, fell 4-6, 6-1, 6-3 to Sargis

Sargis, of Armenia, but Yevgeny Kafelnikov, of Russia, the No.1 seed, advanced with a 5-7, 6-4, 6-3 triumph over Cecil Mamiit, of the United States. Mahesh Bhupathi, of India, lost after serving for the match against Javier Sanchez, of Spain. Leading 5-4 in the final set, Bhupathi won just two points in the next two games and then dropped his service again to go down 6-2, 6-7, 7-5.

Monica Seles, the No.1 seed, made a solid start in her attempt to win the Canadian Open in Toronto, beating Asa Carlsson, of Sweden, 6-2, 6-4.

Seles, who was playing only two days after her tournament victory in Los Angeles, said: "It's tough to play so soon after such a high but it was a good win today," she said. "Asa is one of the biggest fighters out there so I really had to go for my shots."

The unseeded Jennifer Capriati, returning to action after three months out with an ankle injury, quickly picked up the winning thread in beating Silvia Farina, of Italy,



Henman: back to form

6-4, 6-3. Capriati, 21, recovered from a 3-0 first-set deficit and was also 2-0 down in the second.

"I play better when I'm down," Capriati said, "but I wish I could just come out from the first point and not dig myself a hole. My ankle still gets a little sore but it shouldn't stop me from playing any more. I wouldn't say it's 100 per cent, but it's good enough to play on."

Among the seeded players who advanced to the third round were Mary Pierce, of France, the No.6 seed, who beat Sonya Jeyaseelan, of Canada, 6-1, 6-1 and Conchita Martinez, of Spain, the No.7 seed, who came through 6-3, 3-6, 6-1 against Yuka Yoshida, of Japan.

The seeded players to go out included Irina Spirlea, of Romania, the No.9 seed; Brenda Schultz-McCarthy, of Holland, the No.12 seed; Ruxandra Dragomir, of Romania, the No.13 seed, and Karina Haboudova, of Slovakia, the No.14 seed.

FOR THE RECORD

BASEBALL

NATIONAL LEAGUE: San Francisco 7, Cincinnati 3; Pittsburgh 5, Atlanta 2; Houston 13, Florida 2; St. Louis 5, New York Mets 2; Philadelphia 5, Colorado 2; Chicago Cubs 4, Los Angeles 2; San Diego 2, Montreal 4.

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Milwaukee 3, Seattle 4; Texas 12, Boston 2; Cleveland 7, Detroit 3; Kansas City 4, Kansas City 2; New York Yankees 4, Toronto 9; Minnesota 1, Chicago White Sox 8; Anaheim 5.

BOWLS

ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA: Women's national championships. Fourth: Starnes, Starnes, Dwyer (3) (Hemel) beat Dwyer, Starnes, Dwyer (3) (Hemel) 11-10. Fifth: Field Place, Working W (Hemel) 21-15. Final: Starnes, Field Place 17-15. Final: Starnes, Field Place 17-15.

WARRINGTON: Under 35 international match. Scotland 10, Australia 10 (Scotland 10, Australia 10). Final: Starnes, Dwyer (3) (Hemel) 11-10. Final: St

GOLF

Winged Foot looks made to measure for Montgomerie

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT, IN MAMARONECK, NEW YORK

WHEN Colin Montgomerie looked at the venues for this year's US Open and US PGA Championships, he rubbed his hands. Congressional, the site of the US Open, would suit him fine. He has always felt at home on such courses. As it turned out, he finished second to Ernie Els.

In Winged Foot, where the 79th PGA Championship begins this morning, he recognised another US Open-type course, one requiring straight driving and accurate iron play. Since these are the strengths of Montgomerie's game, they explain why the 34-year-old Scot starts among the favourites.

Winged Foot was designed in the 1920s, a golden age for golf course architecture in the United States, when land and labour were cheap and money was plentiful in the large cities.

This explains why there are more good golf courses in Westchester, a county the size of central London, 25 miles north of Manhattan, than in the whole of the state of Texas. Blasted out of granite, it was laid out on the highest piece of

land hereabouts, one from which it was then possible to see the Hudson River five miles away.

The architect was A.W. Tillinghast, a maverick among golf course designers, one with a tendency to wave a pistol and go on drinking binges. Tillinghast would travel from New Jersey to his New York office in a chauffeur-driven car and, when sober, backed Broadway musicals.

His inclination was to design penal courses. His views were influenced by what he learnt on trips to Scotland, where he took golf lessons from Old Tom Morris. "I think that I will always adhere to my theory that a controlled shot to a closely guarded green is the surest test of any man's golf," Tillinghast said. "Extremely large greens breed slovenly play."

Accordingly, Winged Foot's greens are the size of side plates compared with the dinner plates of the Old Course at St Andrews. Furthermore, they are almost as quick and contoured as those at Augusta. "The greens are the smallest

for any major championship by a long way," Nick Faldo, who played in his first major championship in the United States here in the 1984 US Open, said.

There are so many greens that fall off or have severe slopes that you're really only got half or two-thirds of what you see on which you can putt. And then, when you get there, you've probably got a hump in between you and the pin. This course certainly keeps your attention from tee to green."

Montgomerie believes that he has corrected the driving fault that blighted his game on the eve of the Open. He identified it as being due to poor weight transference from his right side to his left on the downswing. This is less of a problem now because Montgomerie, continuing a diet he began at the Irish Open last month, is 17lbs lighter than he was six weeks ago.

"All my weight was going back on the right side and not coming through on to my left," Montgomerie said. "And, when I hit the ball off my right side, I tend to hook it. I have cured that now. I have been practising very well. I am very confident."

Montgomerie, like José María Olazábal, who is 31, falls between two generations. At 34, he is younger than the old guard, represented by Nick Price and Faldo, who are both 40. Tom Lehman, who is 38, and Greg Norman, 42.

Yet he is vastly more experienced than Tiger Woods, who is 21, the 27-year-olds Ernie Els and Phil Mickelson, and Justin Leonard, 25. If form is anything to go by, then the year's fourth major championship will be won by a twenty-something, for Woods overwhelmed the field in the Masters. Els took the US Open for the second time and Leonard triumphed at Royal Troon.

"Every ten years you're going to see a new generation of players coming out," Woods, who is competing in his first US PGA said. "Right now, it is those guys in their twenties."

"The older players definitely have a chance to win any tournament they compete in but, as a rule, as you get older, your skills start to diminish. You can't do anything about that. It is Father Time taking over."

But the US PGA is a law unto itself, often won by a journeyman professional such as Mark Brooks, the defending champion, or Wayne Grady, who was successful in 1993.

One such is Jim Furyk, who has finished in the top ten in eight of his past nine events, including the Open. He is a straight if not overly long driver and has the fifth lowest scoring average on the US Tour this year. Jeff Maggert is another who comes into this category.

In short, whoever wins the last of the year's major championships, it will not be a complete surprise.



Lopez, who first graced Sunningdale's fairways two decades ago, believes this could be her year again in the British Open. Photograph: Gill Allen

Lopez benefits from family support

Nancy Lopez began her love affair with Sunningdale 20 years ago, right at the beginning of her professional career, when she finished second to Judy Rankin in the Colgate European Women's Open and served notice that she was no ordinary golfer.

Now, aged 40, two husbands, three daughters, 43 victories and numerous accolades later, the biggest name in women's golf is back, still smiling, to play in the Weetabix Women's British Open, which starts today.

"It's great to be back," Lopez, who won here in 1978 and 1979, her last visit, said. "I have lots of great memories and good, positive feelings. Everything's very close to how I remembered it and the golf course is even more beautiful. There's a lot more grass and it's in much better shape."

Lopez is also in good shape, physically and mentally, despite the disappointment of losing out in a titanic

Patricia Davies on an American legend reproducing her best form in time for the women's British Open at Sunningdale

final round with Alison Nicholas in the US Women's Open, at Pumpkin Ridge, last month. Lopez has never won her national championship — she has been second four times in 21 attempts — but she relished the contest and paid tribute to Nicholas's resilience.

"Alison played so well and it was fun," Lopez said. "I didn't feel nervous, just excited and pretty charged up. Everybody's been very complimentary — they've stopped me in the street and said they cried with me — and I'm really looking forward to the US Open next year."

In the meantime, she has this week to look forward to — "maybe it's my time to win this Open" — and it is a special treat to be here with Ray Knight, her husband, and Ashley and Erika, two of their three daughters, enjoy-

ing such delights as the London Dungeons and Buckingham Palace.

Knight's presence is a particular bonus. Until a few weeks ago, he was manager of the Cincinnati Reds baseball team but a string of bad results led to his dismissal and he is reacquainting himself with his family. Ashley had the right idea when she heard dad had been sacked. "Let's get a bottle of champagne and celebrate," she said, looking forward to having more time with her father.

Knight and Lopez married in 1982 and, although she never quite swept the board as she had done in her first two years (winning 17 tournaments and hovering up every honour available), Mrs Knight proved no pushover. She was No 1 again in 1985, when many people thought

that domesticity might have blunted her competitive edge and Knight, a fierce competitor himself and a good motivator, was keen that his wife should exploit her talent to the full. She became a member of the Hall of Fame in 1987 and the victories did not dry up until 1994, the first of three consecutive years without one.

In January 1996, Lopez, who had gone through the inevitable crises of conscience concerning her children and her career, came close to giving up. She had battled her weight throughout her life and her clothes did not fit and her golf was not up to standard.

"I wasn't happy," she admitted. "It wasn't my family. It wasn't my husband. It was just me. It's embarrassing being humiliated by your golf game and, as competitive

as I've always been, playing that kind of golf and being away from my family, I felt like I was wasting my time. I love being inside the ropes and competing and I wasn't able to do that."

Now, however, she can. She hired a personal trainer and, disciplining herself ferociously, split sweat and tears on a Churchillian scale. It was worth it, she won again, in April this year.

She can win this week, too, even though she is without her secret weapon from the Seventies, Pete Coleman, who is otherwise engaged at Winged Foot with Bernhard Langer. Coleman was nicknamed the kissing caddy because he received a kiss every time his player recorded a birdie — which she did often, thanks to a putting touch made in heaven — and he remembers it well.

"Nancy was a delight," he said, summing up the world view. "She never panicked and she was always smiling." Some things never change.



Montgomerie leans



Faldo: respects course

TEE-OFF TIMES

US unless stated	B Taylor
All times BST	15.00 and 11.40: C. Toulson, J. Stone, M. Fuller
11.40 today and 15.52 tomorrow: R. Price, J. Hooton, R. Wain	16.01 and 11.48: J. Mason, P. Oakley, B. Boyd
11.40 and 16.01: D. Martin, M. Sandley, I. Garrido (Sp)	16.10 and 11.58: G. Day, M. O'Meara, C. Rocca (It)
11.58 and 16.10: B. Chumbley, P. Jordan, S. Black	16.19 and 12.07: O. Brown, S. Torrance (GB), J. Furyk
12.07 and 16.19: M. Breyer, K. Sutherland, L. Matlock	16.28 and 12.16: F. Funk, B. Mayfair, G. Bors
12.16 and 16.28: W. Grady (Aus), H. Sutton, J. Mahaffey	16.37 and 12.25: C. Parry (Aus), S. Hoch, Y. Kuroki (Japan)
12.25 and 16.37: D. Clarke (GB), P. Nicholson, N. Fazio (GB)	16.46 and 12.34: P. Stanekowski, J. Cook, L. Reiter
12.34 and 16.46: P. J. Johnson (Swe), B. Chesham, C. Stadler	16.55 and 12.43: J. M. Olazábal (Sp), M. J. Roberts (Aus)
12.43 and 16.55: B. Tway, P. Azinger, J. Day	17.04 and 12.52: M. Bradley, P. Jacobsen, P. Blackmer
12.52 and 17.04: A. Magee, P. Goydos, D. Walcott	17.22 and 13.10: B. Zabriskis, J. Sindelar, B. Watts
13.10 and 17.22: F. Couples, J. Parnewik (Swe), F. Ninkovic (NZ)	17.31 and 13.19: M. Brooks, J. Nicklaus, L. Nelson
13.19 and 17.31: C. Fries, E. Felt, D. Hart	17.40 and 13.28: R. Fair, S. Jones, S. McCarron
13.28 and 17.40: P. Stewart, N. Price (Zim), S. Eltringham (Aus)	17.49 and 13.37: H. Irwin, F. Zetter, B. Lange (Ger)
13.37 and 17.49: S. Appleby (Aus), N. Ozaki (Japan), T. Heron	17.58 and 13.46: S. Stricker, P. Lonard (Aus), S. Miyajima (Japan)
13.46 and 17.58: B. Facon, L. Westwood (GB), T. Watson	18.07 and 13.55: I. Letman, G. Norman (Aus), C. Montgomerie (GB)
13.55 and 18.07: T. Woods, E. Els, J. Leonard	18.16 and 14.04: E. Romero (Arg), D. Torre, D. Ogil
14.04 and 18.16: L. Mize, J. Haas, C. Leung	18.25 and 14.13: D. Love, P. Broadhurst (GB), J. Roberts
14.13 and 18.25: T. Toller, D. Duval, R. Darron	18.34 and 14.21: K. Perry, B. Brown, S. Lowery
14.21 and 18.34: T. Kise, L. Wadkins, J. Sluiter	18.43 and 14.30: M. Calacowich, T. Smith, D. Frost (GB)
14.30 and 18.43: D. Nesner, R. Cochran, K. Triplett	18.52 and 14.39: F. Minozzi (Phi), J. Kelly, R. Meloy (Aus)
14.39 and 18.52: V. Singh (Phi), I. Woodman (GB), L. Zanotti	19.01 and 14.48: C. Franco (Par)
14.58 and 19.10: D. Pooley, J. Carter, C. Perry	19.10 and 14.56: R. Gomez, P. Harrington (Phi), C. Franco (Par)
15.07 and 19.18: K. Gibson, B. Andrade, T. Brynm	19.19 and 15.07: R. Goosen (SA), T. Bjorn (Den), S. Clark
15.18 and 19.28: B. Hanning, B. Bryant, J. D. Baker	19.28 and 15.16: S. Kelly, J. Patajani, J. Kilbaha
15.25 and 19.37: M. Burke, F. Dobbs, J. Maccia	19.37 and 15.25: B. Ford, J. Lee, C. Tucker
15.34 and 19.46: S. Schuster, J. Overton	19.46 and 15.34: B. Miskask, J. White, B. Saward

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20/1 Lehman	50/1 Jamieson
20/1 Price	50/1 Olazábal
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25/1 Love	50/1 Woosnam
28/1 Langer	66/1 Appleby
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Pessoa gets Derby bonus

By Jenny MacArthur

NELSON PESSOA, of Brazil, who became the oldest winner of the Hickstead Jumping Derby when he won last year's event on Loro Piana Vivaldi at the age of 60, could have an easier task on his hands when he attempts to repeat that feat on Sunday. The competition, sponsored this year by Osborn Refrigerators and Peugeot, is the centrepiece of the four-day meeting, which begins today.

None of the top five British riders are competing. While the Derby first prize has dropped from £40,000 to £24,000 — after the loss of the former sponsors, Silk Cut — the Valkenswaard Show in Holland is luring top riders with the offer of a £470,000 bonus. Four of the five riders selected for the European championships later this month — John and Michael Whitaker, former winners of the Derby, Di Lampard and Robert Smith — will compete in Holland rather than at Hickstead.

"It's very sad because the Derby is my favourite event, but you can't ignore that sort of money," John Whitaker said. Having won the Aachen Grand Prix in June, one of the three events in the Pulsar

Triple Crown series, Whitaker is in line for the bonus if he succeeds in the Valkenswaard Grand Prix on Sunday, the third event in the series.

Nick Skelton, a triple Derby winner, is not competing at Hickstead because he does not have a suitable horse.

Despite the absence of these five, Douglas Bunn, the owner of Hickstead, was in positive mood yesterday. "There are bound to be clashes with other events in Europe but we've never had a bad Derby — and I guarantee this will be a vintage one," he said.

Pessoa ensured that quality last year with his emotional



Pessoa: the rider to beat

win, nine months after suffering the heart attack that he thought had ended his career and 31 years after his first success in the event. With his horse, Loro Piana Vivaldi, 20, reported to be on "even better" form this year, he is the rider the others have to beat.

Britain's best chance of success lies with William Funnell and his Derby specialist, Comex, who were joint fourth in 1994 and fourth in the Eindhoven Derby last year. The Irish are pinning their hopes on John Ledingham and Kilbaha, the winner of the event in 1994 and 1995. Kilbaha, the only horse to have jumped two double clear rounds over the formidable course, underlined his form when finishing runner-up to Robert Smith in the Dublin Grand Prix last Sunday.

Whatever the strength of the field, the course for Sunday's event remains the same as when Bunn first held the competition in 1961. Such are the demands of the 16 fences — including the Devil's Dyke and the Bank with its 10ft gin drop — that there have been only 38 clear rounds in its 36-year history. Last year, there were none. Pessoa won on four faults.

part of the reason for the Scott's unhappiness, will be fit to start the new season after the injuries which curtailed their tour of South Africa with the Lions. Grayson's groin injury may require another month to mend, while the thigh injury which prevented Townsend's appearance in the third international against South Africa last month needs some further rest.

The clubs (said to include Northampton) interested in signing Scott Gibbs, the Lions centre, may be deterred by the £1 million price tag attached to him by Swansea.

"It's not exactly dead in the water but, at this stage, it looks as though he is staying at Northampton."

Ian McGeechan, Northampton's director of rugby, said after talking to Townsend: "You want to be fair to the player and his development as a club, you want to perform well collectively. I probably understand his predicament better than anyone and I certainly don't want to lose a player of his talents."

Ironically, neither Townsend nor Paul Grayson, whose presence at stand-off is

RUGBY UNION

Townsend turns down Bath

GREGOR TOWNSEND yesterday ruled Bath out of the set of clubs seeking his services for the new season which begins next weekend, while Northampton, his present employers, remain optimistic that he may be staying at Franklin's Gardens (David Hands writes).

Townsend, the Scotland and British Isles stand-off half, had received an offer from Cardiff reputed to be £500,000 over three years but has two years to run on his contract with Northampton and, yesterday, Gareth Davies, the Cardiff chief executive, said:

"It's not exactly dead in the water but, at this stage, it looks as though he is staying at Northampton."

Ian McGeechan, Northampton's director of rugby, said after talking to Townsend: "You want to be fair to the player and his development as a club, you want to perform well collectively. I probably understand his predicament better than anyone and I certainly don't want to lose a player of his talents."

Ironically, neither Townsend nor Paul Grayson, whose presence at stand-off is

BOWLS

Jubilant Blackwell the pride of Derbyshire

DERBYSHIRE, which became affiliated to the English Women's Bowling Association in 1988 and has only 11 clubs, is one of the newest and smallest of the flat-green bowling counties but, yesterday, after an epic journey to the final, one of its teams won the national fours title (David Rhys Jones writes).

Subjected to the ordeal of spending more than ten hours on the green on Monday, a Blackwell quartet — Maureen Barker, Jean Baker, Jean Thompson and Glennis

Haines — defeated the defending champions, Burnham, in the second round.

In the final, Blackwell, who were runners-up two years ago, failed to stamp their authority but still led Jean Meneely, Joyce Ayles, Freda Linberry and Wendy Davis, of Worthing Field Place, throughout to win 7-5.

"It was a tricky rink," Haines said, after blocking her opposite number's path to the jack on the last end, when Blackwell were three shots in front.

CYCLING

Obree back for Britain

By Peter Bryan

speed is there," Obree said yesterday. "And, in recent trials, I feel that I have meshed well with the others."

Obree will not be using his home-made "Old Faithful" bike because of its unsuitability for the techniques of team pursuits. Instead, he will ride a conventional frame, as he has done in the final trials at Manchester this week.

Steel described Obree as "the best man for the job" and Illingworth said that he considered him "a class rider and worth his place, and the only man currently fast enough to join the team."

Obree's inclusion will provide an insurance for Britain in any of the four pursuit rounds should tactics or injury require a team shuffle. However, there is no suggestion yet that he will be called on to ride the individual pursuit, that slot is reserved for Hayles, the national champion.

"The Scot would not enlarge on his hopes for a sponsor yesterday, but confirmed that he would enter the British road time-trial championships next month. "I think that will be the selection event for the world title in October, for which Chris Boardman must be a certainty," Obree said. "But there will be one other place — and I'll be chasing it. Every new country begins with the first step."

Of the three women selected for the world championships, to be held from August 27 to 31, Yvonne McGregor is the best British medal hope, having recently beaten Antonella Bellutti, of Italy, the Olympic champion, in a round of the World Cup series.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SQUAD: Men: 4,000 metres pursuit: B. Steel, J. Clay, M. Illingworth, G. Obree, M. Hayles; 4,000 metres team pursuit: B. Steel, J. Clay, M. Illingworth, G. Obree, M. Hayles; 4,000 metres individual pursuit: G. Obree, M. Hayles; 4,000 metres team pursuit: G. Obree, M. Hayles, J. Steel, J. Clay, M. Illingworth; 4,000 metres individual pursuit: G. Obree, M. Hayles; 4,000 metres team pursuit: G. Obree, M. Hayles, J. Steel, J. Clay, M. Illingworth.

Obree: proved fitness.



Obree: proved fitness.

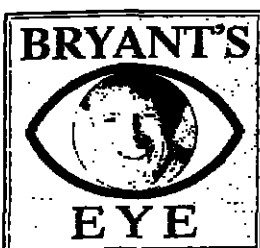
Elvis fans by the thousand rock into town and get ready to go, man, go

The best-dressed road runners will be wearing something a bit special this weekend. The smartest will be sporting white jump suits emblazoned with gold embroidery, heavy rings on their fingers, bushy black stick-on sideburns, and perhaps even blue suede training shoes. For this Sunday sees the running of the annual Elvis Presley International five-kilometre road race.

Saturday is the twentieth anniversary of the death of Elvis and more than 100,000 mourners, musicians and impersonators are making a pilgrimage to Memphis, Tennessee, to pay homage to "the King". Among them will be four or five thousand runners — some of them highly-trained athletes, others fun-seeking joggers — who will line up in front of Presley's mansion, Graceland, to race around the roads where he lived.

The most eye-catching of them will be a strange scattering of Elvis lookalikes. Jeannie Townsend, the race organiser, said: "In our 5K, we traditionally get a number of runners who are dressed like Elvis. This year, with the twentieth anniversary, we're sure to get a whole lot more. It'll be quite a sight. If you run dressed like Elvis, you're sure to get a great reception from the crowd."

The entries for this annual run are up as never before and there should be more than 5,000 starters. For their entry fee (\$12 in advance, \$15 on race day), the entrants get an elaborate six-colour Elvis T-shirt.



shirt. "It's a real collector's item," Townsend said. "It has a picture of Elvis as a young man, with his Cadillac, his guitar, his motorbike and his airplane, all spinning on a gold record." For an extra \$20, the runners can also pick up a limited-edition race medalion.

The event is a great charity money-raiser. Last year, it raised more than \$40,000 for

'There is quite a problem with fake sideburns peeling off'

United Cerebral Palsy and, over the years, the race has drummed up more than \$600,000 for cerebral palsy charities.

"This year, for the first and only time in our 15 years, we're holding our race on a Sunday," Townsend said. The customary start is at 8am on the Saturday but, because the actual anniversary of Presley's death falls on Saturday, the

race is in danger of running into the annual candlelit vigil. This begins on Friday night outside the Presley mansion, where he is buried.

The vigil is certain to draw massive crowds this year and, all through the night and into Saturday morning, thousands will file silently up the Graceland driveway to Presley's graveside in the Meditation Garden. On Sunday morning, the roads around Graceland will be closed to all traffic for the race.

The heat in Memphis in August is certain to be fierce and competitors may have to contend with some unusual difficulties. Apart from the fluid loss that comes from trying to run in a full Elvis outfit, there is also quite a problem with fake sideburns peeling off when the going gets hot.

Sunglasses, too, are unusual. Forget the expensive go-faster wraparound shades that are all the rage at the world athletics championships in Athens. On the starting line in Graceland, you need 70s-style aviator sunglasses — "as worn by the King".

At the feeding stations, as well as water and sports drinks, the runners will be urged on by the sound of Elvis singing. As the lookalikes staggered to the first water stop last year, they were greeted by the strains of *Don't Be Cruel*.

The race comes right at the end of Elvis Presley Week, and these days no city celebration is complete without its mass fun run. Events like the London Marathon have done a great job at harmonising competitive sport with entertainment and mass participation. Like rock'n'roll, road running has its highly-paid stars, but anyone can join in and have a go.

In the Flora London Marathon last year, for instance, there were runners running alongside Dennis the Menace, Big Ben, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Batman and girls in Wonderbras. Anyone who thinks these runners do not earn their charity money the hard way should talk to Billy Wilson. He has completed five London marathons and recorded his fastest time while running as the back end of a pantomime horse. "By three miles," he



Hundreds of lookalikes are expected to take part

said, "I was dehydrated, exhausted and bleeding from where the straps of the costume were chafing me." But he and his son made it, performing an equine cursey as a mark of respect to the Queen when they passed Buckingham Palace.

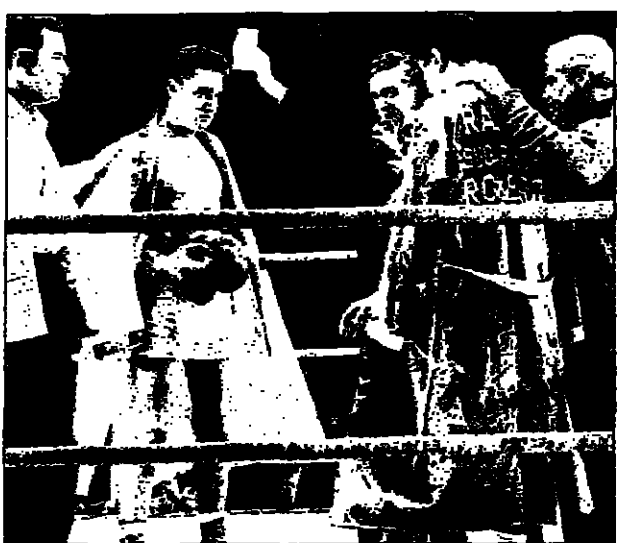
There have been thousands of reported sightings of Elvis over the past 20 years, by people who refuse to believe he is dead. On Sunday you will have a hard time convincing some that Elvis is not alive and well and out there pounding around the road race.

It is unlikely. There is little

evidence that Elvis ever took much exercise off stage. He is said to have liked the odd game of racketball and, in *Kid Galahad*, made in 1962, he played the part of a novice boxer who fights and sings his way to the top.

Film critics said that Elvis looked "surprisingly paunchy" when stripped for his role as a boxer. So, if Elvis is out there on Sunday, don't look for a skinny guy in shorts and vest. He will be in a jump suit, moving with rhythm, and running like a king.

JOHN BRYANT



Elvis in a rare sporting role in *Kid Galahad* (1962)

SAILING: BRITAIN FIFTH AS AMERICANS CLAIM FIRST ADMIRAL'S CUP WIN FOR 28 YEARS

United States restored to head of the fleet

BY EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

IT HAD been a long time coming and, almost to the end of a dramatic day in Plymouth harbour, the outcome was in doubt, but the United States yesterday captured the Champagne Mumm Admiral's Cup, the unofficial world championship of offshore sailing, for the first time since 1969.

With only seven teams competing and a close points spread between the leading five going into the Fastnet Race, the situation was always going to be tight. With the weather playing its own unpredictable hand, the final stages saw four teams, Australia, Germany, Italy and the Americans, all grappling for the top spot.

After a charge by Australia

on Tuesday night, the decisive moment came in a desperately close finish for the ILC 40 fleet, which parked up in almost calm conditions off the breakwater at the entrance to Plymouth harbour early yesterday. As is so often the case, the leaders watched the laggards of the fleet creep up — including the American boat *MK Café*, skippered by John Kolfus, who had been in sixth place for much of the race. Kolfus had the momentum and simply sailed round his rivals to finish second behind the Germans on *Pinta*.

The finish was dispiriting for Italy, whose ILC 40, *Brava O8*, had led her class for most of the race and looked to be the cornerstone of a back-to-back win in the championship, before being demoted to sixth in her class. While the Italians lost 16 points to finish third

overall behind Germany, the United States gained 16 points to take a hold on the title that even a sixth place for their Mumm 36, *Jameson*, a few hours later could not shake.

The United States, who became the first team since Great Britain in 1989 to go into a Fastnet leading and hold on from there, built victory on their big boat, *Flash Gordon 3*, skippered by Ken Read and designed by Bruce Farr. She performed better than any other boat in the championship overall, finishing second behind the Italians in the Fastnet.

Don Genitempo, the United States team manager, was relieved after having spent the past two days worrying that the ghosts of two years ago, when the Americans blew their chance in the Fastnet, were returning to haunt him.

"What a wonderful end, what a wonderful relief to have finally won this thing after 28 years," he said. "Every event has its highs and lows — when you win it, you can breathe a sigh of relief."

The Britain team finished fifth overall, the equivalent of two Fastnet places behind Australia and just two points ahead of New Zealand, whose collapse from second overall going into the last race set the scene for an American win. But Britain can take heart from a respectable performance after finishing in last place two years ago.

The best feature this time was the effort by John Merricks, Ian Walker and their crew on board *Tim Barrett's Mumm 36, Bradamante*. Belying their limited experience in keel boats and offshore racing, Merricks and Walker, ably assisted by David Howlett, James Stagg and others, dominated their class in the Fastnet to finish as the top 36-footer over the nine-race series. Only *Flash Gordon* beat her to the top spot in the regatta.

While their big boat, *Corum Indulgence*, did well for much of the regatta under Chris Law, the ILC 40, *Easy Oars*, helmed by Andy Beadsworth, was the weak link, failing to match the speed of the newer boats in her class. After finishing third in the class in the Fastnet, however, her owner, Tony Buckingham, got off the boat not in the least bit disheartened and keen to have another go in 1999. "I love it with a passion," Buckingham said. "We've got to win the Admiral's Cup. I'm stuck in and I've got the scars to prove it."



Genitempo holds aloft the cup as the Americans celebrate

Standings, page 38

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 41

KRIS

(c) A Malayan dagger of Javanese origin with a long wavy blade. The Javanese word, *Kris*, is derived from the Sanskrit word *Kris* (to cut). It is the Sultan of Kelantan. He carries a kris (a dagger) made from an elephant tusk.

TRUNNION

(a) Each of a pair of opposite gudgeons on the sides of a cannon upon which it is pivoted in its carriage. Horatio Nelson, dispatch, 1794: "The Agamemnon's two 24-pounders are both ruined, one split up to the rings, and the other with the trunnion knocked off so much that it is useless for shot."

KROMO

(b) The polite form of Javanese, used by those of lower status when addressing social superiors. T. S. Raffles, *History*, 1827: "Nearly half of the words in the vernacular have their corresponding term in *Besa-Kromo*, without a knowledge of which no one dares address superiors."

KRILLUM

(a) A proprietary name of various mixtures of polyacrylate salts and other carboxylated polymers manufactured as soil conditioners for improving the texture of the soil and its ability to resist erosion. *Science News Letter*, 1952: "The soil improverment chemical will come on the market soon under the name of Krillum."

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Best eaten cold, cooked by somebody else?

When some people get sacked from their job, or learn that their lover has been cheating on them, or they get swizzled by someone, they become so consumed with fury that they react like far in a fire and just start spitting abuse at their employer or their two-timing lover. Getting your own back in such a childish, uncontrolled fashion is not the most sensible way to behave.

The most sensible way to behave is to sit down calmly and count to ten. Counting to ten will give you the breathing space to think up a much more poisonous method of exacting revenge than you could have dreamed up on the spur of the moment, when you were still blinded by rage. Maybe a letter, such as hiring somebody to exact your revenge for you. Maybe even somebody like the Get-Back Agency, which we saw last night on *Inside Story's* V for Vendetta (BBC1).

It would be touching to imagine that the Get-Back Agency sends musicians with large amplifiers to stand outside your revenge-victim's house and play Paul McCartney songs very, very loudly. Their repertoire is actually more varied. Take Candy and Costas Constantino. They wanted revenge on their local health club, which had just inconvenienced and humiliated them by revoking their membership. So, naturally, the Get-Back team sent Dawn, a 22-stone "Roly-Poly" artist, to visit the gym as a potential member and cause havoc. Dawn tampered with the gym's dumbbells, which looked like marbles in her plump fists. Then she jumped into the swimming pool, still fully clothed, to cool off. Dawn was ordered to leave. An agency spokesman severely videoed the occasion as a souvenir for Candy and Costas before organising a banner-waving demo outside the club to protest against

its fatist membership policies. The press, who can be manipulated a lot more easily than 22-stone Dawn, came to cover the story. Costas thought it money well spent. We never saw the bill.

But then along came consultant psychiatrist Dr Raj Persaud, chewing his nails and telling us that he was "worried that we're going to see more and more vengeful acts actually occurring". He was also sniffy about the "Crapogram", a plastic card which is sent anonymously to someone on your behalf: a couple came up with the idea when they wanted to get their own back on somebody, but then thought there might be a wider market for such a brainwave. Dr Persaud said: "I don't think the world is fundamentally going to change because you're sent someone a rather trivial, nasty message. It may make you feel better in the short

REVIEW



Joe Joseph

term, but what has it really gained you in the long term? Oh don't be so puffed. Raj? A cold beer after work doesn't really gain you anything in the long term either, but what is so wrong with feeling better in the short term?

Inserting gloomy clips of Dr Persaud's armchair psychiatry seemed a misguided attempt by the programme-makers to provide an intellectual insurance policy to

a voyeuristically entertaining documentary. There is a difference between revenge-taking pranks and people who hire contract killers, though Dr Persaud didn't seem to notice it. Even Kenny, whose business card reads "Retribution Guaranteed", knows the difference between right and wrong: "I draw the line at doing irreparable damage to anyone. I would never kill anybody." See? What did I tell you, Raj?

"The kind of things I asked to do," said Kenny, "run the range from supergluing someone's door up, put dog shit through their letterbox, blow up the car with the wife and kids in it, kill somebody else's wife and kids. It's a weird planet." So weird that maybe Candy and Costas's health club will hire Kenny to wreak vengeance on the Get-Back Agency. Then we could cut to a long-faced Raj Persaud tut-tutting on the sofa: "That would be a dangerous form

of revenge pyramid-selling, and might well end in tears."

In *The Day That Changed My Life* (BBC2), Mike Fanning never got a chance to get his own back on anybody when he was robbed of his glass import-export business, his marriage and his family, because the cause of his heartache was the trade embargo declared by the UN against Yugoslavia, as a result of the civil war there: all his capital was tied up with goods in Sarajevo. Four months later he was sleeping rough in Edinburgh.

"You think it's never gonna happen to me. I'm never gonna end up on the streets, I've got a good job. I've got a nice little business, a nice family, nice wife. I've got money coming in every week." Wrong! But Fanning is a single-minded survivor: "I refuse to be beaten by any system." What is inspiring about Fanning's story

is not just his determination to rebuild his life — by the end of the film he has begun a haulage business — but his lack of self-pity or rancour at life's mockery.

Lucinda Lamborn gave us a quick tour around the newly restored Foreign and Commonwealth Office in *One Foot In The Past* (BBC2), constantly squeaking with disbelief, as though being regularly goosed by an invisible ghost, as she recounted how the ornate Victorian decoration of this temple to Empire had been repeatedly vandalised: in the 1930s the interior was scrubbed with pumice because the colours and gilding were deemed vulgar, and in the 1960s everything was hidden behind false ceilings and partition walls. How can we rely on the inhabitants to defend Britain's interests around the world, when they can't even be trusted to look after a few painted ceilings and cornices properly?

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- 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (7) (23375)
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- 9.20am Ready, Steady, Cook (7) (5265530)
- 9.50am EastEnders (7) (5186917)
- 10.20am Put It to the Test (5135288)
- 10.45am *Carrie's* Caribbean (7) (2190882)
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- 11.05am Good South (7) (8432004)
- 11.50am Good Neighbours Fans recall their favourite characters and moments from the Australian soap (7292027)
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- 12.05pm Wipeout (7) (8795337)
- 12.35pm Neighbours Anne decides to steer well clear of love's troubled waters (7) (1027207)
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- 1.30pm Regional News and weather (88983424)
- 1.40pm *Columbo: Make Me a Perfect Murder* (7) (4068283)
- 3.10pm *Quincy* Crime drama, starring Jack Klugman and Yvonne Day (7) (1011335)
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- 5.10pm *Byker Grove* Youth club drama, starring Jack Baldwin and Joanne McIntosh (7) (3549086)
- 5.35pm *Neighbours* (7) (709191)
- 6.00pm Six O'Clock News (7) (268)
- 6.30pm Regional News (849)
- 7.00pm *Watchdog: Value for Money* Vanessa Feltz reports on the extent of for house-swap holidays (7) (32404)
- 7.30pm *EastEnders* George makes a shady deal with an old acquaintance — much to Annie's dismay (7) (733)
- 8.00pm *Alpaca* Anita Newcourt has to deal with a very embarrassing delay on a VIP-led charter flight to Hong Kong. To make matters worse, it involves BA chief executive Bob Ayling (7) (9288)
- 8.30pm *Pilgrims* Rest Comedy, starring Gary Olsen and Owen Taylor (7) (8795)
- 9.00pm Nine O'Clock News (7) (7725)
- 9.30pm *Bernardo's Children* After 62 years of separation, Mabel Johnson recalls how she was finally reunited with her sister, while more recent generations who have grown up in Bernardo's care still hope for a happy ending to their tales of abuse and personal tragedy (22) (7) (874191)
- 10.20pm *The Mrs Merton Show* (7) (891894)
- 10.50pm BBC *1970 BBC National Orchestra of Wales* under Mark Wigglesworth perform Beethoven's Pastoral Symphony (154220)
- 11.45pm *The File of the Golden Goose* (1969) Starring Yvonne Charles Gray and Edward Woodward. Espionage drama about an American agent and a Scotland Yard detective who join forces on an undercover operation to infiltrate and apprehend a counterfeiting gang. Directed by Sam Wenderker (790806)
- 1.30am *Weather* (2322383)

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BBC2

- 6.00am O U Watering the Desert (1367646)
- 6.50pm *Energy* at the Crossroads (289844)
- 7.15pm *See Hear* Breakfast News (7) (23375)
- 7.30pm *Telethon* (7) (4414849) 7.55pm *Brum* (7) (1002337) 8.10pm *Raccoons* (7) (1501714) 8.35pm *Bright Spots* (7) (5668820) 8.50pm *Spiderman* (7) (7012648) 9.35pm *Glad Rags* (7) (8148882) 10.00pm *Smurfs' Adventures* (7) (7154842) 10.25pm *Osaka Doko* (7) (4898882) 10.55pm *Spiderman* (7) (7012648) 11.15pm *Telethon* (7) (4414849)
- 11.15pm *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1942) Oscar-winning musical with James Cagney, Joan Leslie and Walter Huston. Directed by Michael Curtiz (7) (180153)
- 1.15pm *Glynis* Christian Tastes Royal Thailand (10610849) 1.40pm *Blockbusters* (98839578) 2.05pm *The Season* (7) (1028288)
- 2.30pm *International Women's Golf: The British Open* Hazel Irvine introduces coverage of all the action from Sunningdale (84424)
- 5.30pm *Golfing, Golfing, Golfing* panel game (988)
- 6.00pm *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* Odo's secret feelings for Kira interfere with his duty (7) (737608)
- 6.45pm *Nature Special: 21st-century Fox* A documentary on Britain's most successful predator and cunning survivor — the fox (7) (922240)
- 7.30pm *How Buildings Learn* In the final programme of the series, Stewart Brand explains different methods of chartering a building's history (7) (375)
- 8.00pm *Wild Harvest* with Nick Naim Scallop harvesters blackberry picking, organic stock (7) (4630) **WALLS: And Now Over To...**
- 8.30pm *Treks* Childhood days at Beachy Head: angling for razor fish, and the joys of amber (7) (8337)
- 9.00pm *Third Rock from the Sun* Dick gets an important lesson in self-control (7) (139172)
- 9.25pm *Dances with Wolves* The annual "Tribal" festival in Bolivia (7) (136917) **WALLS: Reputations**
- 10.15pm *Building Sights* (7) (501795)
- 10.30pm *Newsnight* (7) (247443)
- 11.15pm *Fifty Years On* Madrugat Jeffrey and Art Malik host an important international concert from Birmingham, marking the 50th anniversary of Indian independence. Artists including Ravi Shankar, Kula Shaker and Pakistan's leading band Vital Signs (7) (825153)
- 12.55am *Holiday Weather* (313405)
- 1.00pm *Learning Zone: Powers of the President* (531115) 8.00pm *Sporting Chance* (531115) 8.30pm *Language Essentials* (531115) 8.50pm *Small Business Programme* (79080)

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HTV

- 6.00am GMTV (7645375)
- 9.25pm *Win, Lose or Draw* (7) (5266269)
- 9.55pm *Judge Judy* (7) (3127795)
- 10.20pm *News* (7) (8912443)
- 10.25pm *Regional News* (7) (891714)
- 10.30pm *And the Sea Will Tell* Mini-series based on the true story of a mysterious double murder on remote exotic island. With Richard O'Connell, Rachel Ward and Karl Bohner (12) (5198817)
- 12.00pm *Regional News* (7) (891714)
- 12.30pm *ITN News* (7) (1013004)
- 12.55pm *Shortland Street* (108795)
- 1.25pm *Home and Away* (7) (14036358)
- 1.50pm *Murder, She Wrote* Love Witness Mystery with Angela Lansbury (9088882)
- 2.50pm *Cat Crazy* (7) (9832207)
- 3.20pm *News* (7) (2411462)
- 3.25pm *Regional News* (7) (2411462)
- 3.30pm *Potamus Park* (7) (4112725) 3.40pm *Thumbs Up* (8817795) 3.50pm *Rupert* (848268) 4.15pm *Transylvania Pet Shop* (7) (4787612) 4.40pm *RedBus* (7) (247228)
- 5.10pm *A Country Practice* (2551288)
- 5.40pm *ITN News* (7) (159269)
- 6.00pm *Home and Away* Shannon is surprised when Lachie asks her to move in with him (7) (133004)
- 6.25pm *HTV West Tonight* (917)
- 7.00pm *Emmerdale* Tony has a brush with death after losing his concentration (7) (5608)
- 7.30pm *Blues and Twos: Make Pumps Five* Documentaries about the emergency services (7) (801)
- 8.00pm *The Bill: The Mayor* The Home DC Rawlin swaps a dilemma (7) (4356)
- 8.30pm *Undercover Customer: Operation Klondike* A drug-runner smuggling a lucrative shipment into the Scottish Highlands gives Customs a logistical headache (7) (8191)
- 9.00pm *The Ruth Rendell Mysteries: Simisola* (23) Wedford is at a garden party when he is called to investigate a second dead body (7) (8917)
- 10.00pm *News at Ten* (7) (52714)
- 10.30pm *Regional News* (7) (82511)
- 10.40pm *West Eye View* (7) (524004)
- 11.15pm *On the Waterfront* (88714)
- 11.45pm *News* (7) (103820)
- 12.35am *The LADS* (7) (7923689)
- 1.10pm *Emergency!* (8126115)
- 1.40pm *Planet Rock Profiles* (9710115)
- 2.10pm *The Making of Men in Black* (9434863)
- 2.40pm *Life and Loud* (7) (300883)
- 3.40pm *The Good Sex Guide* Laid (7) (6199047)
- 4.35pm *The Time, the Place* (7) (7037157)
- 5.00pm *The Pulse* (7) (28414)
- 5.30pm *News* (7) (59641)

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- 1.50pm *Cat Crazy* (9880240)
- 2.20-3.20pm *Hart to Hart* (8831795)
- 5.10-5.40pm *Shortland Street* (2551288)
- 6.25pm *Central News* (118795)
- 10.40pm *Film: Too Good to Be True* (92753240)
- 12.40pm *Planet Hit* (511088)
- 1.10pm *Rockmania* (7052221)
- 2.10pm *Planet Rock Profiles* (9424863)
- 2.40pm *God's Gift* (4571009)
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- 1.50pm *Cat Crazy* (9880240)
- 2.20-3.20pm *Blue Heelers* (8831795)
- 5.10-5.40pm *Home and Away* (2551288)
- 6.00-7.00pm *Westcountry Live* (96458)
- 10.45pm *All the World's a Stage* (668801)
- 11.15pm *Power Game* (665714)
- 11.45pm *Prisoner: Cell Block H* (103820)
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CHANNEL 5

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Hani killer 'had links with Tories'

Hearing told of invitation from Monday Club

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN JOHANNESBURG

CLIVE DERBY-LEWIS, convicted of the assassination of Chris Hani, the South African Communist Party leader, yesterday cast a spotlight on links between British rightwingers and the Far Right in South Africa.

Speaking in Pretoria on the second day of an amnesty hearing of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Derby-Lewis, a leader of South Africa's right-wing Conservative Party, described links with Tory MPs and anti-communist groups in the US. He said the Monday Club of right-wing Tories invited him to address it in the 1980s and said he was well received.

Derby-Lewis told the commission: "I was given a report by the Monday Club which clarified the Western dependency on South African titanium, platinum and other minerals."

Derby-Lewis and Janusz Walus, a Polish immigrant, are serving life sentences for the murder of Hani in April 1993 which threatened to deepen racial conflict in South Africa a year before the first democratic elections.

The two men are testifying about the murder this week in an attempt to win an amnesty from the commission, which can free them if it decides they have told the whole truth, that

the murder was politically motivated and that they were acting for their political organisation.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, Derby-Lewis, a Conservative MP and president of the far-right Western Goals Institute, travelled extensively. In June 1988, the Institute — set up as a subsidiary of the US Western Goals Foundation — sent Derby-Lewis to Britain when he was foreign affairs advisor to Andries Treurnicht, the Conservative Party leader.

At the 1989 Tory conference, the organisation launched a magazine titled *European Dawn*, with articles supporting the Republicans in Germany and National Front in France. The magazine sponsored a fringe meeting with Derby-Lewis as the main speaker. He returned to Britain in 1990 as vice-president of Western Goals and reportedly had "a productive series of meetings with British MPs".

Derby-Lewis is speaking for the first time in public about a murder that remains a painful chapter in South African history. He said he was motivated by the policies of the Conservatives, then the main right-wing group, and killed Hani to create chaos and open the way for a coup by the Right. At one stage yesterday, Derby-Lewis said that Hani's



Limpho Hani, right, widow of the assassinated communist leader, attending the hearing this week with Winnie Madikizela Mandela

assassination was a tribute to how much he was loved. Only a man of his stature would do as a target for his scheme he said. "Hani had to be the target. No one else had the following he had — perhaps it can be seen as a tribute to

Chris Hani that he was chosen," he said. Hani's family is fiercely opposing his two killers' bid for amnesty. Derby-Lewis provided the gun from which his accomplice, Walus, fired four bullets into Hani outside his

home. He said he gave Walus an untraceable gun with a silencer but had not expected him to act so soon.

"It came as a terrible shock," he said. After hearing news of the murder on the radio, he wondered whether

something else had happened so he would not have to carry out the plan. But he heard the next day that Walus had been caught, and was arrested himself a week later.

The assassins' lawyers have fought to prevent disclosure of

statements they made to police which may suggest others were involved. They have argued that the statements made after their arrest were "inadmissible" because police gave them alcohol and deprived them of sleep.

Alarm foils bid to steal Versace's ashes

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

THE tomb of Gianni Versace, the murdered fashion designer, has been attacked in the cemetery at Montecitorio in Lake Como, police said yesterday.

They said an attempt to steal the urn containing Versace's ashes was foiled when an alarm went off. The alarm was installed by Santo and Donatella Versace, who feared their brother's grave would be the target of robbers or vandals.

Versace was killed on July 15 outside his mansion in Miami South Beach by Andrew Cunanan, an alleged homosexual serial killer who several days later was himself found dead. Versace was cremated and buried three days later. He had had a villa on Lake Como, and there are plans to build a chapel for his remains near the lake, with space for the ashes of his parents and other members of his family.

The attempted robbery happened last Sunday night but was revealed only yesterday. The police said a chisel had been used to try to cut through a heavy iron chain on the door of the chapel containing the gilded urn.

Celestino Villa, the Mayor of Montecitorio, said he believed only one person was involved "probably somebody mentally unbalanced". But *La Stampa* speculated that the intention had been to demand a ransom from the Versace family for the return of the urn.

The *Gazzetta Ufficiale* reported yesterday that a meeting of shareholders in Versace's industrial empire has been called for the middle of next month to discuss restructuring the group.

At Miami Beach, authorities at Jackson Memorial Hospital, where Versace was taken after he was shot, said they were looking into the possibility that some members of his staff had "abused Versace's privacy" on that day. Officials put a trace on computer hits on the Versace file and have sent a memorandum to at least ten staff members demanding an explanation for why they needed access to the file. (AP)

ANC locks up the marketing rights to Robben Island

BY INIGO GILMORE

A ROW has erupted over the marketing of Cape Town's Robben Island after a move by the Government to patent the name of the historic place where President Mandela was imprisoned, just months after the name was registered as a trademark by a private company.

The Original Robben Island Trading Store in Cape Town, which registered the island as a trademark eight months ago, has accused the

African National Congress Government of behaving like their apartheid predecessors. The comments came after Alec Erwin, the Trade and Industry Minister, declared in the latest *Government Gazette* that use of the phrase "Robben Island" and any combination of the "Robben" and "Island" were now under government ownership.

Under the ruling "Robben Island" is now off limits when linked with any trade, business, occupation or in connection with a trademark, mark or description applied to goods. The

move to patent the name follows a recent clash with the private company which attempted to sell T-shirts, sweatshirts, caps and toy seals in striped prison uniforms at Cape Town's popular Victoria & Alfred Waterfront before it was forced to close by the authorities.

The company now stands to lose its entire investments and Willem Steenkamp, the company's spokesman, is furious. "The National Party government used to bring in laws to suit its will and now this Government is doing the same thing," he

said. "They've taken away our legal right to trade and used it for themselves. The more things change the more they stay the same."

The small island, a short boat trip from Cape Town harbour, began life as a penal colony in the 17th century and Mr Mandela spent 18 years locked up there along with other senior ANC leaders.

There are plans to establish a museum, bars and restaurants on the island under the aegis of the Government-backed Interim Management Authority of Robben Island

and recently the South African President hosted a banquet on the island for Hillary Clinton.

Tour operators and curio vendors have been told that they will have to tread carefully when marketing Robben Island. But Mr Steenkamp says his company is consulting lawyers about the Government's decision to withdraw the commercial use of the name to see if it was unconstitutional. "Curios based on tourist attractions like Buckingham Palace are not for exclusive use by government," he said.



Mandela in jail on island for 18 years

Prophet of doom's guided tour of America's riskiest regions

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

LIFE in the United States is just one hazard after another, according to Mark Monmonier.

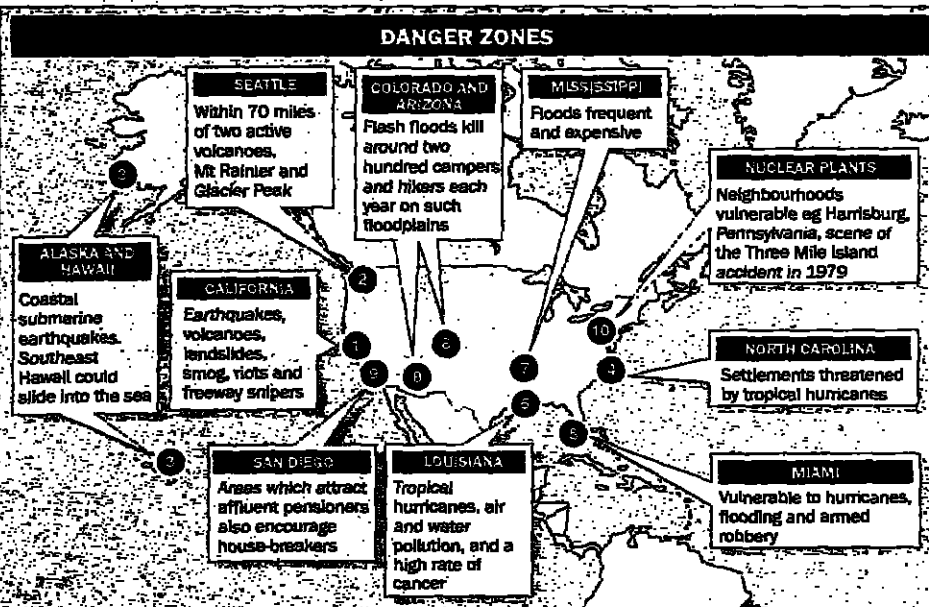
A mapmaker who charts dangers ranging from natural disasters to crime rates, he has drawn up a list of America's ten riskiest places, to which he would be reluctant to move. It is a catalogue of catastrophe that takes aim at some of the country's most populous and popular areas.

Leading the roster is practically the whole of California — and not just because of earthquakes, fires, mudslides and tidal waves. Professor Monmonier says the Golden State is infested with smog, freeway snipers, urban riots, and oil spills. Anyone tempted to stay for a few decades can add thirst to the list. He predicts drought. "I don't suppose I'll be terribly popular in California," he says.

Where can one escape to? Not Seattle, usually near the top of lists of most liveable cities. The jewel of the Pacific Northwest is only 70 miles from Mount Rainier and Glacier Peak — active volcanoes, and the area is vulnerable to severe earthquakes.

Hawaii and Alaska are susceptible to tidal waves, whipped up by submarine earthquakes in the Pacific. Professor Monmonier reckons they could race inland and wash up to areas 3,000 feet high. He speculates about part of Hawaii sliding into the sea.

The long, thin barrier islands of North Carolina's Outer Banks are wonderfully isolated getaways on the At-



lantic coast, yet tropical hurricanes are frequent and escape to the mainland can be difficult. Professor Monmonier says that if the global warming raises sea levels, settlements on the Outer Banks will be wiped out in the next century or so.

Millions of Britons bask in Florida's sunshine, but remember, says the chronicler of woe, how the shoddy construction was turned into matchwood by Hurricane Andrew south of Miami. Miami has one of the highest crime rates in the nation. The Louisiana coast has more hurricanes, plus polluted air and water from unregulated chemical industries.

Widespread flooding when the Mississippi burst its banks four years ago, as well as Red River floods this year in Mon-

tana, just confirm the need to stay away from the flood plains of major rivers. Professor Monmonier says.

Even smaller flood plains should be avoided in mountainous areas such as Arizona, Colorado or West Virginia, where storms can turn streams into raging flash floods that kill about 200 campers a year.

Affluent pensioners are drawn to the Sun Belt, but so are year-round housebreakers. Watch out, says the professor, in cities along the southern border of the US such as San Diego, Los Angeles, Phoenix, El Paso and Miami. They are "especially hazardous" for burglary and violent crime.

Rounding out his top ten danger zones, Professor Monmonier advises staying

away from nuclear power stations. Major accidents are rare, with the exception of the 1979 meltdown at Three Mile Island near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, but there is the spectre of terrorists bombing their way into a nuclear plant.

Not on the list, oddly, are tornadoes, though Professor Monmonier has tracked "tornado alleys" across Oklahoma, Texas, and through the Mid-West to Illinois. He is a professor of geography at Syracuse University, New York state, which he admits has cold winters that can give people heart attacks from shovelling away snow. He has written a book, *Cartographies of Danger: Mapping Hazards in America*, and is currently on holiday. He has not told his office where.

Trump divorce move

New York: Maria Maples, the wife of Donald Trump, has hired a man they call the "pit bull" lawyer of divorce lawyers to try to get a larger divorce settlement (Tunku Varadarajan writes).

Ms Maples is to contest the terms of her pre-nuptial agreement with Mr Trump, under which she stands to receive a divorce payout of only \$2.5 million (£1.5 mil-

lion), a paltry sum compared with the \$25 million Mr Trump was shaken down for by Ivana Trump-Mazzuchelli, his flamboyant previous wife.

The New York Post reported yesterday that Ms Maples has now secured the services Robert Stephan Cohen, the divorce lawyer who previously acted for Mrs Trump-Mazzuchelli in her divorce war with Mr Trump.

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Crowd of 20,000 bays at Tehran killer's execution

FROM MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

AN Iranian serial killer, dubbed the "Vampire of Tehran" because he preyed on girls and women at night while working as a taxi driver, was hanged from a mobile crane yesterday before 20,000 frenzied onlookers who chanted "Allahu Akbar" (God is greatest).

Before he was tied to the yellow crane and hoisted, legs flailing, high into the dawn sky, male relatives of his nine victims took turns whipping Gholamreza Kordieh, 28.

His killing spree over three months earlier this year terrorised women in the Iranian capital. Serial killers are virtually an unknown phenomenon in Iran but already there is concern that Kordieh's reign of terror could provoke copy-cat killings.

Yesterday, onlookers battled through traffic to witness the hanging. Some camped out overnight to ensure a good view. Others perched on trees and road signs.

The crowd surged forward when Kordieh, who was not blindfolded, was dragged out

barefoot and with his hands tied. About 1,000 baton-wielding riot police held them back as the condemned man was lashed for ten minutes.

Kordich, who still managed to walk after he the lashing, wore a quizzical expression as he gazed at those baiting him. His last words were: "I borrowed money from no one, and I owe none to anyone. I ask God for forgiveness for what I did."



Kordieh: taxi drive proved on women

A GROUP of Imperial Army veterans has publicly confessed to wartime atrocities in the hope of counterbalancing moves to sanitize modern Japanese history for the nation's classrooms.

As Japan marks the 52nd anniversary of the end of the Pacific War, former soldiers have broken their silence and described their own role in murder, rape and cannibalism in occupied China.

"We want to share our raw experiences with young people before we die," said Tsuyoshi Ebato, 84, who heads the Association of Returnees from China, a veterans' group. "These are things that children will not find in government-censored textbooks."

The confessions appear in *What did Japan do in China?*, an 80-page magazine that Mr Ebato's group hopes to publish regularly as a forum for old soldiers troubled by guilt. In the first edition, Mr Ebato reveals how soldiers like himself — a young officer in the 59th Division serving in

Shandong Province — honed their skills with the bayonet.
"June 12, 1945. A beautiful day without a cloud in the sky," he wrote. "Four Chinese peasants were tied to posts. They'd done nothing wrong. One was no more than a boy, who cried out to me to let him go because his mother was waiting for him."

I thrust my bayonet into each of them in a frenzy, until my instructor signalled it was "time to stop." Another veteran, Narakazu Uematsu, recounts how in March 1943, villagers were beaten with clubs to get them to reveal the Chinese Army's position. They refused to talk. "I took out my gun and shot seven elderly people, one after the other."

The magazine also contains the confession of a sergeant-major who raped and murdered a number of Chinese

women. Then, because food supplies were short, he sliced off pieces of flesh from the women's thighs, fried them and made a meal for members of the unit. "Terrible things like this happened on a daily basis in our division," says Mr. Ebató. "We can no longer remain silent because some historians are

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the war, has incensed other Japanese veterans and nationalists who refuse to acknowledge the Imperial Army's misdeeds. They have denounced the Association as "masochistic" and are campaigning to purge school textbooks of references to military abuses. For years, the Educa-

tion Ministry has ensured that schoolbooks omit or play down shameful events like the building of the Burma Railway at the cost of 16,000 Allied lives.

But this year, for the first time, Japanese schoolchildren are being told about one nasty episode — the 200,000 “comfort women” forced into prostitution for the Japanese military before and during the war. This has brought angry protests from a coalition of scholars, business leaders and politicians demanding the reference to comfort women should be purged and that Japanese children should be taught “history the Japanese can be proud of”.

Mr Ebato says that as long as Japan tries to over up its wartime misdeeds it can never enjoy the trust of neighbouring countries invaded by the Emperor's armies. "The Japanese way is to 'keep the lid on the stinking pot,'" he said. "But with this magazine we want to lift the lid and reflect on our crimes."

The "Vampire of Tehran" hangs from a crane after being lashed by relatives of his nine female victims.

New study claims pot is as addictive as alcohol

Dushanbe: The Tajik Government said yesterday that Colonel Makhmud Khudoyberdyev, a rebel army colonel, had agreed to be relieved of his command and withdraw his forces to barracks after four days of fighting around the capital Dushanbe.

The fighting between two rival warlords broke out on Saturday. The colonel's troops abandoned their positions under repeated rocket attack from forces loyal to President Rakhmonov. (Reuters)

CANNABIS is as addictive as alcohol, according to a study of drug users in Australia published yesterday.

Moscow: Twenty-one people died and 90 are in hospital after eating poisonous mushrooms near Lipetsk and Voronezh, southwest Russia. Mushroom-picking is popular among city-dwellers. (AFP)

In a survey of 200 long-term users, researchers at the National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre found that 92 per cent were physically dependent on cannabis and almost 40 per cent were severely dependent. Withdrawal symptoms included insomnia, depression and appetite fluctuations.

Wendy Swift, National Drug and Alcohol Research Centre psychologist and author of the study, said: "A lot of people say pot isn't addictive and you can't get physically addicted, but you certainly can."

Algiers: An armed group surrounded the village of Hraouate in northern Algeria, slit the throats of 24 people and then shot and wounded ten others who tried to flee, hospital officials said. (AP)


She said that while withdrawal from cannabis was not as severe as from alcohol, other common symptoms included anxiety and night sweats. "In the general population, of all the people who ever tried cannabis about 10 per cent would become dependent — probably a similar risk to developing alcohol dependence. The longer you use cannabis the greater the risk of becoming dependent."

Lusaka: Zambian police arrested 56 people after scores of traders rioted when their central market stalls were destroyed by a mysterious fire. Armed police continue to patrol the area. (Reuters)

Ms Swift said that other characteristics of dependent users included having a high tolerance to the drug and spending a great deal of time obtaining it, using it or recovering from it which interfered with their obligations or daily activities.

Jakarta: Nine tribespeople, forced by famine from isolated forest on Indonesia's Sulawesi island, have learned that Indonesia is independent. One old man thought it was still ruled by the Dutch. (AFP)

The survey was conducted on 200 men and women in Sydney who had been using cannabis at least once a week for an average of 11 years. More than half used it daily and three quarters took it four times a week.



Jerusalem: Tatyana Suskin, above, was ruled fit to stand trial on charges of pasting posters in Hebron depicting the Prophet Muhammad as a pig. The offences carry a 26-year sentence. (Reuters)

Most were employed or studying and 60 per cent had tertiary qualifications. Researchers also found that women were more dependent on cannabis than men.

Ms Swift said: "People use cannabis because it's nice, it does good things for them and relaxes them. It's better than alcohol because it's not an addictive feeling. But there are trade-offs. It's not totally benign and it's not the devil it's painted to be."

□ Beijing: A Chinese actress who starred in an anti-drug film has died of an overdose, the *Xinmin Evening News* reported. The death of Zhu Jie, 30, a former drama school classmate of screen superstar Gong Li, was confirmed by Beijing Film Studios (AP).

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Dr Thomas Stuttford on abusing the spine, conversations with aliens, new drugs to aid schizophrenics, the dangers of jellyfish for holidaymakers, and an important test for chlamydia

Back strain is peak of mounting stresses

Recently a mountain guide speaking on the BBC World Service said that his charges no longer climbed because of a love of solitude and the beauty of the mountains, but were motivated, he feared, by a form of competitive self-aggrandisement. Some mountaineers, it seems, are prompted by motives little different from those of the Victorian fairground gymnasts who vied with each other to lift the heaviest weight.

Alan Hinkes's attempt to be the first Briton to climb the world's 14 highest peaks has, he believes, been thwarted by the flour on the surface of his chapati. While enjoying his meal, Mr Hinkes inhaled at the wrong moment, the flour tickled the inside of his nose, he sneezed explosively and propped a spinal disc.

Hinkes makes the mistake of many patients by only considering the immediate cause of a prolapsed (slipped) disc; this may be comparatively trivial — simply twisting to pick up a briefcase from the back seat of the car, lifting a weight no heavier than an 18-month-old toddler, straining to change a tyre, or even simply coughing, sneezing or blowing the nose.

Mr Hinkes must have sneezed tens of thousands of times before without prolapsing a disc: why did it happen on this occasion? Discs, which are the shock-absorbing washers between the vertebral bones, degenerate with age and, in consequence, wear and tear is frequently a

predisposing factor. Sooner or later the gelatinous nucleus pulposus, the squidgy cushion at the centre of the disc, will herniate through a tear in the annulus fibrosus, the tough outer ring around a disc. The protruding, herniating nucleus pulposus may only press on the posterior ligaments in the back, which in itself is painful, or it may touch one of the nerve roots and produce the agonising pain of sciatica. The usual story is that the patient has been subjected to his or her back to hours, or even days, of mistreatment. This mistreatment may be no more than sitting cramped in a car, hunched, weary, strained by the driving and dehydrated; characteristically the drivers neither stop to stretch their legs nor have time for a drink.

It may be that the sufferer has been continually submitting his back to excessive workloads, or has been repeatedly jarring it. Whatever the source of the abuse that causes the weakness in the annulus fibrosus, it is likely in time to damage it so that it becomes irretrievably weakened. If this happens, a cough, carrying luggage in from the car, or even stooping to put on socks may be enough to cause the final prolapse. The sufferer is then gripped by an acute pain which is so agonising that, as Mr Hinkes discovered, any movement is an excruciating effort. After a time the pain usually starts to radiate down one or both legs.

Not all disc lesions present with classic symptoms; in other cases they develop slowly. Although sciatica, with the pain radiating down a leg, is the most common nerve root pain, the area that is affected depends on the level in the spine where the disc has been damaged. In some cases the pain may be felt in the lower abdomen, in the back, or it may radiate to the inner thigh and genitalia. This latter distribution is known as loin and groin pain, and is a regular source of diagnostic confusion in gynaecological and urology clinics.

The advent of the MRI scan has made it possible for a precise diagnosis to be made, and the point of damage precisely located. Nobody now should be left lying for weeks, or, in the past, sometimes even months, on boards while nature healed the problem. Prolonged rest hinders recovery. Microdiscectomy, the operation in which the surgeon shaves away the disc where it is impinging on the nerve, has revolutionised treatment. Patients who have been so incapacitated that their activities have been seriously restricted for more than three weeks deserve full investigation, probably including an MRI scan, rather than the mere prescription of

painkillers. Immediate investigation is called for in those patients in whom the nerve damage is affecting their bladder or bowel control, or their potency. Nerve root pain in children and adolescence also requires immediate investigation. Mr Hinkes is now back in Yorkshire and enjoying his fish and chips, although he said in a radio interview that notwithstanding the chapatis he had every intention to climb his peaks. At his next attempt he should take it all rather more steadily, and find time to take pleasure in what he is achieving.



Accident-prone mountaineer Alan Hinkes: a sneeze only precipitated his injury, it wasn't the underlying reason

Symptoms that must never be ignored

WHEN Proust was in his mid-30s he wrote to his father, who was a doctor, about symptoms attributed to his prostate.

Proust was anxious in case he was already developing signs and symptoms of prostatic enlargement, although in retrospect a more feasible diagnosis was that he had developed a chlamydial infection which had given him urethritis, possibly complicated by prostatitis.

Men are usually all too well aware when they have caught chlamydia, a sexually transmitted infection. The resulting NSU (non-specific urethritis) results in a visible urethral discharge of varying severity and colour, and there is pain on passing water.

Women, on the other hand, may not notice a urethral discharge, or an increase in their cervical discharge, and are so prone to cystitis that painful urination may be dismissed without investigation.

Unfortunately, under-ratting these symptoms can have serious long term consequences. Chlamydial infections are the commonest cause of chronic pelvic inflammatory disease, which accounts for over 70 per cent of blocked fallopian tubes.

Testing for chlamydia has previously involved collecting swabs from the cervix and urethra and sending them to an efficient laboratory for analysis. Recently the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ) has reported on a study that tested the efficiency of a recently introduced urine test as a means of diagnosing chlamydial infections in women and as a screening test for those women who could be at increased risk of picking up sexually transmitted diseases.

A view of this research by Dr Linden Ruckert in *Pulse* magazine, whose practice was involved in the study, suggests that the ligase chain-reaction urine test is not only less intrusive for women but more effective than existing tests and that it will become an important means of detecting chlamydial infections in women before their tubes have been irretrievably damaged and they suffer infertility.

Air marshal's flight of fancy

The autobiography of Air Marshal Sir Peter Horsley, former war-time pilot and later deputy head of Strike Command, is being published in October.

There are already press and radio reports that the book contains an account of Sir Peter's conversation with an alien, who told the air marshal about life on flying saucers. One interesting feature of these travellers from outer space is that as they journey they carry with them in their luggage spare body parts.

Whatever happened in the flat in Smith Square, Westminster, where Sir Peter had his encounter in 1954, may never be unravelled but he is unlikely to convince either his RAF colleagues or his doctors, that his informant, Janus, existed.

It is interesting that patients' auditory, visual or olfactory hallucinations, and the delusions that stem from them, are dependent on the prevailing culture. If Sir Peter had lived several centuries ago, and if the explanation for the strange happenings in Smith Square is the result of a hallucination, he might have been confronted

by the devil, or a saint. Religious imagery is now unfashionable, and people who believe they have had paranormal experiences are more likely to recount how they have met a man from outer space. And many are convinced that they have been abducted or raped by the little green men, but when pressed

London club was regularly disturbed by the noisy argument that one much-loved member held with his voices. Together they battled over the political points reported in the newspapers and other members were treated to a running commentary on the discussion inside his head.

Hallucinations may also be tactile so that patients not only hear the voice of the invisible stranger, but may feel them, and may even complain that the hallucinatory presence has made sexual advances.

Visual hallucinations are also common in many forms of dementia as well as in psychotic conditions. Delirium, tremors and Lewy body dementia, a form of senile dementia, are particularly associated with visual hallucinations.

In Lewy body dementia the vision is frequently incomplete, a phenomenon that may

account for the number of ghosts, which are either headless or without feet.

Perhaps Sir Peter really did meet an alien, but for those of us who don't like to think that the man in charge of a nuclear strike force was hallucinating, there is another more reassuring explanation. It is possible that Sir Peter, exhausted after his duties at Buckingham Palace where he was then posted, dropped off to sleep in the Smith Square flat and experienced a hypnagogic hallucination.

Hypnagogic hallucinations are the phenomena in which a person who is in the twilight zone between sleep and wakefulness sees, hears and even feels a hallucinatory other person. The image is very real and it can be very hard to convince the dreamer that the incident only took place in his or her mind. Hypnagogic hallucinations are comparatively common and whereas they are usually part of a continuing sleep disorder, they can occur in people who don't have a history of abnormal sleep patterns.



Sir Peter Horsley

Jellyfish warning to holidaymakers

THE hot weather has produced the usual problems for seaside holidaymakers. This week visitors to beaches in East Anglia have been suffering from jellyfish stings.

The tentacles of jellyfish release a mild toxin when they are touched. It usually causes little more trouble than some reddening of the skin, a faint rash which is mildly irritant. The symptoms are readily alleviated by a simple painkiller — *Veganin*, for instance; for adults, *paracetamol* for children, and inflammation is reduced by the application of hydrocortisone cream. If part of the tentacle remains stuck to the skin an application of vinegar from the picnic basket will usually cause it to drop off, or it may be removed by applying sticky plaster and tearing off.

Some patients are allergic to such stings. If the reaction is very severe they may need an immediate subcutaneous injection of one in a thousand adrenalin, and in the very worst cases transfer to hospital.



Watch out for jellyfish on the beach

New drugs aid schizophrenics

THE introduction of anti-psychotic drugs 30 years ago was a huge advance in the treatment of schizophrenia. Unfortunately 25 per cent of patients failed to respond to these drugs, and half of those treated with them relapsed within two years. Many of the drugs also have unpleasant side effects.

Over the past year or two a new era in the treatment of schizophrenia has started with the advent of the atypical neuroleptics. The indications for the prescription of *Risperdal* has recently been extended. The advice to doctors to use *Risperdal* with caution in the elderly has been replaced with the statement that it is well tolerated in older patients.

Dr Tommy Sharma, senior lecturer at the Maudsley Hospital, London, said: "These new drugs offer a proven treatment with fewer side effects than the older treatment. Patients are less likely to suffer excess tiredness, sexual dysfunction, gross weight gain, or uncontrollable movement to the face and limbs than are those taking conventional neuroleptics. The new drugs are also better at controlling a wide range of psychotic symptoms."

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Ancient art without a history

Up to 90 per cent of the antiquities sold on the London auction market have no provenance. In the first part of a two-part series, Peter Watson exposes an archaeological scandal

Last month, archaeologists on both sides of the Atlantic were shocked to discover that more than a score of priceless stone carvings that were once an integral part of the spectacular palaces of Nineveh and Nimrud in ancient Babylon (now modern Iraq) had been hacked from the walls and were being touted on the international art market in London, New York and Paris.

The matter came to light when a man living in Mayfair, central London, who had bought one of the carvings in good faith, sought permission to take it out of Britain. Dr John Curtis, the expert from the British Museum who was called in to vet the application, spotted that the object had been looted from Nineveh and refused the licence.

Such pillage shows nowhere is now safe from thieves. Later this year, two British archaeologists will reveal much more disturbing and wide-ranging evidence about the traffic in looted antiquities.

Over the past four years, they have been looking into several important collections of ancient artefacts amassed in recent years, and have made these revelations:

● Up to 90 per cent of the antiquities that appear on the London auction market are unprovenanced — many of which may have been illegally excavated and smuggled out of their countries of origin.

● Although Sotheby's was shown earlier this year, in *The Times* and on Channel 4, to have sold antiquities that had no provenance and in some cases had been stolen and/or illegally excavated and smuggled, unprovenanced traffic elsewhere is almost as bad.

● Many modern private collections are made up largely of illicit objects.

● Collectors, or the experts who catalogue their collections, are often deliberately misleading about provenance, concealing the fact that antiquities have been looted and smuggled.

● Certain museums and other institutions in Britain and abroad may be unaware of, or turn a blind eye to, the background of these unpro-

venanced artefacts. In doing so, they flatter collectors, who may bequeath these objects at some point in the future. To that extent, such museums have allowed commercial considerations and ambition to override their duty to scholarship.

● Collectors, well aware of this attitude in museums, stage exhibitions in these institutions, which seek to confer respectability on otherwise unprovenanced collections.

● Most important, the scholars show how our understanding of the past is threatened by the widespread scale of the looting, and how it renders the bulk of the ancient objects in

government officials and museum curators about the way looting affects our understanding of the past. However, combined with the previous disclosures, the new evidence will put further pressure on salesrooms everywhere to curb the traffic.

The method used by Drs Gill and Chippindale relies on close attention to detail, stamina and tenacity in following up paper trails into obscure journals and dusty archives. The two have calculated the proportion of antiquities that have turned up for sale at the major auction houses with no declared history over the past three years. In May 1997, the

figures for New York auction houses (excluding Bonhams, which held no sale) were: Christie's, 89 per cent; Sotheby's, 67; and, overall, 76. The figures for the July 1997 London sale were: Bonhams, 94 per cent; Christie's, 86; Sotheby's, 73; and, overall, 86. One defence often put forward by the auction houses is that unprovenanced antiquities may not necessarily have been illegally excavated and smuggled out of their country of origin, but that they might have come out of those countries before modern laws were in force.

The short answer Drs Gill and Chippindale give in reply to this is "nonsense". Indeed, they go further, and damn it as a "convenient fiction", a presumption that suits the art trade. Looking at four modern collections, they traced each of 569 objects back as far as its provenance would go, and found that only 101 items had been in a previous collection.

That figure should be put alongside the fact that, in four other collections where calculation was possible, 449 out of 546 objects, or 82 per cent, first came to scholars' notice in the past 30 years. This is important, as the Archaeological Institute of America has drawn up guidelines forbidding its members to have anything to do with antiquities with no provenance and that have appeared on the market after December 31, 1973.

What is therefore clear from the figures unearthed by Drs Gill and Chippindale is that the great majority of the fine antiquities that have appeared

A typical Greek figure

the high-profile new collections archaeologically meaningless.

These revelations come from Dr David Gill, currently a senior lecturer in the classics and ancient history department at the University of Wales Swansea and before that a curator at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, and Dr Christopher Chippindale, senior assistant curator at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at Cambridge and editor of *Antiquity*, Britain's most widely respected archaeological journal.

As academics, Drs Gill and Chippindale's first aim is to inform other archaeologists,

in the past 30 years have no provenance whatsoever. Bluntly, very few antiquities have ever been in an old collection or someone's attic. Instead, most objects without a history may have been illegally excavated and smuggled — and fairly recently at that.

No less revealing is the wording used by auction houses and collectors when describing where objects came from. In the collections and sales that Drs Gill and Chippindale looked at, it transpired that 395 out of 590 artefacts were described in very woolly ways. Some were "said to be" from such-and-such a place, others were "allegedly from" island X, still others were "possibly from" city Y. Some were simply labelled "Y".

Even when a place name is given as a find site, it turns out that many are really euphemisms, phrases so vague as to be archaeologically meaningless. Instead of saying "Turkey", dealers use the terms "Anatolia", "Asia Minor", "Black Sea Region", "Ionia" etc. An aura of provenance fills space in the catalogue, making it appear that the collector's curators, or salesroom cataloguers have earned their fee.



Auction houses everywhere will come under increased pressure to curb the traffic in unprovenanced antiquities

Anyone who doubts that should consider Drs Gill and Chippindale's next move, their most audacious and the most difficult for them to follow through. For with a large number of objects, they managed to trace back their history through earlier sales and collections. This involved delving in dusty archives and locating little-known catalogues with a limited circulation. But their efforts were repaid. They found that the provenance of many objects had, in their words, "drifted".

Take, for example, an object in one of the exhibitions they looked at, "Art and Culture of the Cyclades", held in Karlsruhe, Germany, in 1976, one of the most important showings of Cycladic antiquities ever held. No. 41, an abstract figure, was labelled "Provenance unknown". However, in an exhibition held in the United States in 1987 entitled "Early Cycladic Art in North American Collections", the same object was labelled "Reputedly found on Naxos". If any extra information had come to light in the intervening years, the catalogue of the 1987 exhibition did not make this clear.

Similarly, a marble head, No. 177 in the Karlsruhe exhibition, was also labelled "Provenance unknown", but by the time of the US exhibition, it was "Reputedly found on Keros". In a third case, a statuette of a woman, part of the Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection, shown in "The Gods Delight: The Human Figure in Classical Bronze Age Art", at Cleveland, Ohio, in 1988, had come from "Syria or Lebanon", according to the catalogue. By the time the same figure was displayed at the Metropolitan Museum in 1990, it was labelled as "from Egypt".

Many more such examples could be given and the implication is plain: most of these provenances could be baseless, to hide the possibility that they may have been looted and smuggled.

Drs Gill and Chippindale next turned their spotlight on several prestigious institutions — the Fitzwilliam Museum, the Royal Academy in London, the Hermitage in St Petersburg and the Metropolitan Museum — that have exhibited large collections of antiquities in recent years whose origins were at the least questionable.

In "The Glories of the Past" — the title given to the exhibition of the Shelby White and Leon Levy collection at the Metropolitan Museum in 1990 — Drs Gill and Chippindale found that only 4 per cent of this collection had a known provenance, that some 90 per cent had no provenance whatsoever, and that the remaining 6 per cent fell into the notorious "said to be" or "probably" categories.

The "Crossroads of Asia" exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1992 comprised a collection belonging to a mysterious organisation, "A.I.C." — what the initials stood for was never explained. In this collection, 88 per cent of the objects had no history before the exhibition, but were legitimised because the Fitzwilliam show also featured properly provenanced artefacts from the British Museum, the Ashmolean and the Louvre.

And in the George Ortiz Collection, shown at the Royal Academy in 1994, 23 per cent had no provenance at all, while 62 per cent were in the "said to be", "possibly" and "allegedly" categories. The point here is not that there were one or two objects in each of these collections that were open to question, but that the vast majority were.

It is important to add that we are not dealing with "everyday" antiquities, but with some very significant objects. Drs Gill and Chippindale highlight this by focusing on a number of specific antiquities whose provenance they were able to investigate:

● A bronze statue of Lucius Verus in the "Glories" exhibition in New York. This is most probably one of 20 life-size bronze or marble statues that were looted in the Sixties from Bubon in northern Lycia (the part of Turkey opposite Rhodes). The room from which these sculptures were stolen still contains the inscribed statue bases, which allow us to know the identity and order of the statues that once stood there. The room seems to have been linked to the Roman imperial cult, and a statue of the emperor Septimius Severus was among others looted.

● An Attic black-figure amphora, by the Buccleugh Painter, from the last quarter of the sixth century BC, showing a bearded ploughman on one side and a multi-branched tree with birds on the other side. This object, which forms part of the Shelby White-Leon Levy collection, was bought at auction at Sotheby's, Lot 132, in the auction house's sale on December 9, 1985, for £110,000. It can now be revealed as having been consigned to the salesroom by Giacomo Medici, the Italian dealer who was shown earlier this year to be the mastermind behind so much of the illegal antiquities trade.

Sotheby's marked catalogue for the sale where the Buccleugh amphora was bought — and which was made available to me — shows that the object was consigned by Christian Boursaud, Medici's right-hand man.

We are left, therefore, with the inescapable conclusion that many modern collections of antiquities are, for the most part, made up of valuable objects that have been illegally excavated, smuggled out of their countries of origin, often then bought at auction, with labels attached that may well be archaeologically meaningless. The true nature of this whole business depends on disguise.

● Tomorrow: Fantasy archaeology, the facts and the fiction

Encounters of the clairvoyant kind

How easy to sneer at poor Diana, Princess of Wales, who on Tuesday, hand in hand with Dodi Fayed, flew by Harrods helicopter to the Derbyshire home of Rita Rogers, medium, apparently, to the mega-rich.

Dodi and the Princess emerged beaming, having clearly been told some Good News by Rita, who, while claiming never to snitch on her clients (the Duchess of York is also among their number) is nevertheless in the process of writing her autobiography. The Princess is not noted for the acuity of her character judgment, clairvoyant or otherwise. Some years ago, I was dispatched to Surbiton by the newspaper for which I then worked, with instructions to have a "session" with clairvoyant Betty Patko, who was reportedly giving the then troubled Princess — still married, but in the throes of the "Squidgy tapes" farrago — the benefit of her otherworldly wisdom.

Betty, a grandmotherly figure with beady eyes, informed me that I had a lovely aura, a long life ahead of me and a recently deceased relative, an older man in uniform, keeping an eye on me from The Other Side. "Your father?" she suggested, tentatively. "No? Ah, then your grandfather." But both my grandfathers had died before I was born. Betty would brook none of this. "Well he is there," she said, firmly.

I departed none the wiser about the uniformed man and with a reinforced conviction that anyone who consults a clairvoyant needs their head examined. And I speak as one whose own head was in dire need of scrutiny when I embarked upon my own

It is easy to mock Diana for consulting a clairvoyant, but Sandra Parsons who has been there, and done that, sympathises

episode of medium madness ten years ago.

The New York incident, as I call it, was prompted by my engagement to Chuck (yes, really), a lanky, good-looking American who was kind, decent, and, it has to be said, wealthy. But despite the fact that he had given me a stunning diamond the size of a Malteser and that his parents adored me, I could not rid myself of the increasingly uncomfortable thought that I had made a hideous mistake.

Matters came to a head one Thanksgiving when, at a family dinner, I had a sudden, appalling vision of this being it for the next 60 years. Thousands of miles away from my own family and friends, I took myself off the next day to Greenwich Village for retail solace and time to think. And then I saw it. On a huge corner site, the pink neon sign said CLAIRVOYANT.

I was through the door before you could say Betty, and endured an unrelenting 45 minutes which ended with the woman saying that I was clearly in need of help and that for an additional \$200 she would gladly

do some extra work with her crystal ball. I told her she could keep that for other poor suckers and stalked out.

But by now I was hooked. Stupid, I reasoned, to have gone somewhere so commercial. Real clairvoyants, I told myself, were more discreet. I searched the Village sidestreets before deciding upon a narrow brownstone bearing the minutest of "clairvoyant and medium" signs.

A dishevelled blonde opened the door and announced that she was doing her Hoovering, which for some ridiculous reason convinced me she must be genuine. Mercifully, I have forgotten her name. She was unable to help on the question of my future marriage, but did tell me that within the year someone close to me would die.

She also told me that when I got back to England, I should immediately buy three red roses, and for three consecutive nights have a bath, sprinkling the petals in the water. After each bath I was to wrap the petals in aluminium foil, and at the end of the three days, post them to her. I know, I know. But I did it. A few days later, I was woken by the

phone at 7am — 2am New York time. It was the clairvoyant. "Sandra, thanks for the petals. I've been up all night chanting for you, and I have to tell you I know what your problem is. Your aura is cracked, badly."

She paused for me to assimilate this terrible news. "I can heal it for you, but it won't be easy. I'm going to have to use real gold, and you know that's not cheap. We're talking \$5,000."

The more I laughed, the more offended she became. "Sandra, if it was your roof, or your car, you'd do it, wouldn't you? This is your aura we're talking about. This is serious."

I hung up on her and came to my senses. I handed back the diamond to my erstwhile fiancée and finally renounced all lurking belief in clairvoyants when, a year on, no one close to me had died.

A few years later, I was round at a friend's for tea when her immensely down-to-earth Australian nanny suggested she give me a tarot card reading. I told her I thought such things were nonsense but let her do it anyway. "This is amazing," she said, pointing out various cards. "You are going to meet and marry a wonderful man who is younger than you. You will have children. You will be insanely happy. You lucky, lucky thing."

I snorted my disbelief and forgot all about it. Within the year I had met, fallen in love with and married my husband, who is five years younger than me. We have a daughter. We are (touch wood, not that I'm superstitious, of course) insanely happy. As I said, easy to sneer at the Princess. But, for me at least, easier still to understand.

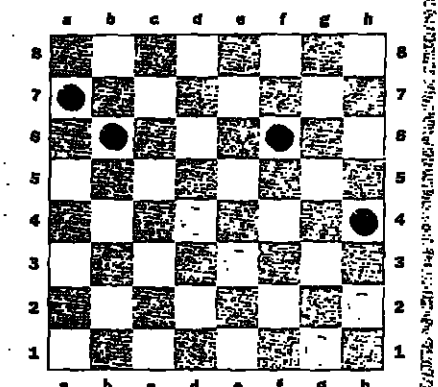
THE TIMES CHALLENGE OF THE MIND

Week two of *The Times Challenge of the Mind* competition with £10,000 worth of prizes to be won. The competition, to coincide with the first Mind Sports Olympiad, invites you to test your wits. Every day this week we will set you a number of puzzles to get you thinking. For further details of the Mind Sports Olympiad, at the Royal Festival Hall, London, from August 18 to 24, and how to enter, call 0171-703 2828.

£500 DRAUGHTS PROBLEM by Paul Lamford

Draughts, known as checkers in the US, appears to be descended from Alquerque, which dates from 1400 BC. The modern version is played on an 8x8 board and 12 checkers of each colour are placed on the back squares of the first three ranks nearest the player. The object of the game is to capture all your opponent's men, or make the opponent's remaining pieces immobile. Single checkers move diagonally forward one square at a time. They capture by jumping diagonally over the opponent's checker, or checkers, when a space is vacant behind each checker. A capture must always be made if possible. When a single checker reaches the opponent's back rank it is promoted to a king and can move and capture diagonally, either forwards or backwards.

In the diagram White can force a winning position. Which of these moves should he play? a) d4-c5 b) h2-g3 c) e3-f4
Call 0891 102 724 (ex UK 44 990 200 618) before midnight tonight with your answer, a, b or c. The winner will get £500 and three runners-up will receive a £50 voucher, donated by Hamleys for use in its Regent Street or Covent



Garden stores. Winners will be chosen at random from all correct entries received and the answer will be published on Friday. Normal TNL competition rules apply. Entry call cost 50p a minute.

£10,000 worth of prizes to be won

There's £100 to be won today with this ten-minute Mensa teaser. The winner will be chosen at random from all correct entries received by midnight tonight. Call 0891 102 725 (ex UK 44 990 200 619). 0891 calls cost 50p per minute. All readers who get two or three of today's Mensa puzzles correct will receive a certificate and a Mensa information pack which includes a home IQ assessment test.

TEN MINUTE MENSA PROBLEM

Q1. Replace each suit of diamonds with a word which forms two longer words in each case. What are the missing words?

BLUE... NECK... WING... KING

Q2. My FIRST is an ACT that can be PLAY. My SECOND is an APRIL term that is MEAT. My THIRD is a NOBLE and also a LADY. My FOURTH is a CRUEL term that is DREAD. My LAST is in STORM but not in MAY.

What am I?

Q3. A novel along with 1982 Dictionary, 83 Thesaurus & 84 purchase of Dunder. Today's Mensa Challenge was sold?

TUESDAY'S SOLUTIONS

RAIN RUMMY. Answer is correct. The correct card to discard is the 4-4. Every other card in the hand is part of a possible meld, but the 4-4 needs two additional cards to make a meld. Final Mensa problem: 1 328 - in, (reading left to right) multiply the first two digits of the first number which equals the last two digits of the second number. Repeat for second two digits etc. 2 136 - alphabetical positions of letters multiplied, to 867. 3 Branch. The jewelery item is again Branch. TWENTY. Answer 4, 85, is correct. Second Mensa problem: 1 Number plus 1, thus a is 6, b is 12, c is 8, d is 7, 2 Hamburg. 3 Answer is 1.

*Paul Lamford is a former editor of *Games and Puzzles* magazine and is currently commissioning editor of chess and bridge for Batsford Books

A bridge for the gap year

Tessa Blackstone explains the new deal on grants

Today hundreds of thousands of anxious 18-year-olds will learn their A-level results. I offer my congratulations to those who have gained what they hoped for — and to those who have not, it is important that they look at all available options, from alternative courses to repeating next year.

The results show continuing high levels of achievement, with an overall pass rate of more than 87 per cent. Nearly half of young people now achieve a qualification at this level, but we must do significantly better if we are to succeed as a nation in the next century, with more young people gaining either A levels or equivalent vocational qualifications.

This year we are able to refute one of the more damaging canards levelled at A levels. It cannot assist young people's self-esteem to be told that their exams are watered-down versions of those taken 20 or 30 years ago. Ofsted and the schools curriculum authority have thoroughly examined these claims and have concluded that standards in A levels and GCSEs have remained broadly the same for 20 years.

I am determined to ensure that the standards of our national qualifications continue to be rigorously maintained. We have already taken action on this, including rationalising the examination awarding bodies and reducing the enormous proliferation of A-level syllabuses.

We will be consulting in the autumn on how best to meet our commitment to support broader A levels and upgraded vocational qualifications, underpinned by rigorous standards and key skills. The report in yesterday's *Guardian* that we plan to "axe" A levels is silly seasonal nonsense.

Full-time students going to university this year will do so in a system where tuition remains free, although part-timers and further education college students have always faced fees. The Government has inherited a university system with a funding crisis. If we did not address funding for the future, access would be curtailed, and quality seriously affected.

Last month we responded to the independent Dearing committee's recommendations by announcing changes to student maintenance and introducing fees. The contribution which parents have to make, taking into account both fees and maintenance, will not be any bigger next year than this year. In addition, students from less well-off families will not have to pay fees.

It is important this point is repeated. There will be extra maintenance loans available to students at a zero real rate of interest. Repayment periods will be considerably more generous than under the present loans scheme, and will be related to ability to repay. It is important that students and their parents understand the new scheme, because there has been a lot of poor advice around in the past few weeks.

Last week we had available for the first time figures on gap-year students. About 19,000 young people have decided to apply for a place at university in 1998 instead of 1997 in order to take a year off. Many of them will be doing voluntary work. They will have been promised a place for 1998 conditional on their examination results. We have given particular consideration to this group since those figures became available.

We want to encourage volunteering. Thousands of young people each year work on environmental or social projects at home or in developing countries. Those who have taken up such opportunities already, and who have a conditional place for next year, will be treated exactly as if they had started in higher education this year — the same mix of loans and grants, and no tuition fees. We will also be examining ways to encourage more volunteering in the future. Many students will undertake valuable work experience in preparation for their course of study. Some will be volunteering in situations not covered by the major national organisations. Others may simply be travelling around the world.

For reasons both of fairness and administrative simplicity, we have therefore decided to place all 19,000 gap-year students who have already applied for a deferred place under the same rules. If they have received a firm or conditional offer of a place by August 1 for 1998 based on this year's results — and they meet the university's requirements — they will be treated as if they started university in autumn 1997 in terms of both fees and maintenance.

In considering new funding arrangements, equity and fairness have been our watchwords. They have helped to inform what I believe everyone will recognise to be a sensible and fair way forward for all students, including those taking a gap year.

Baroness Blackstone is Minister of State for Education and Employment.

Attempts to sustain the myth of gentlemanly cricket may be damaging our prospects, says Magnus Linklater

Can we afford to play the game any longer?

Perhaps it is time we stopped being shocked by cricketers behaving badly. There comes a point when thundering epithets such as "disgraceful", "shameful" or "unforgivable" — all to be read yesterday after the ill-tempered NatWest semi-final — become as predictable as a four-ball bounce from a frustrated seam bowler. With cricket these days being driven as hard as any other sport by big money and competitive pressure, why should we be surprised by incidents which, on the football field, would merit little more than a free kick and a wagging finger from the referee?

Because, sir, cricket is more than just a game. It is a way of life. Because, like nuns cycling through the dawn and warm beer in village pubs, it stands for certain standards of what we once called civilised behaviour. Because, as Lord Harris, one-time President of the MCC, wrote to *The Times* on his 80th birthday in 1931: "It is more free from anything sordid, anything dishonourable, than any game in the world. To play it keenly, honourably, generously, self-sacrificingly, is a moral lesson in itself, and the classroom is God's air and sunshine."

I wonder. I wonder, in particular, how long we can maintain the fiction of cricket as a moral benchmark in these days of "sledging", ball-tampering, and English cricket captains vouchsafing such sentiments as "You are a

awful umpire". There comes a point where myth and reality strain so hard in opposite directions that the myth ceases even to be ironic. These days to say "it isn't quite cricket" is to invite the response "...and just as well, too".

It may even be the case that this uneven struggle to maintain the gentlemanly aspect of the game has become a positive barrier to the improvement of cricket in England. In Australia it has been a byword for infamous behaviour ever since Dennis Lillee booted Javed Miandad in the backside in the 1981 Pakistani Test series and Miandad threatened him with his bat. My 1982 *Wisden* called it "the reflection of a graceless age" and said that true cricket-lovers had been "sickened by Lillee's antics". That may or may not have been the case, but far from it being judged a moral cancer at the heart of cricket, Australia has progressed to become the best Test team in the world, hammering an abject England into the ground, while Lillee himself is welcomed as an honoured guest in the commentators' box, where he swaps bantering remarks about the state of English cricket with Geoffrey Boycott. Yesterday's thug is today's elder statesman.

There is much hypocrisy at the heart of this dispute. Everybody who was at the Essex-Glamorgan match on Tuesday admitted that it was a nail-biting contest between two sides motivated by the utmost animosity, both of them determined to win. Alan Lee reported in *The Times* that "the entire game had been combustible, though throughout the afternoon it was punctuated by incidents which exacerbated the tension, including a fearsome bouncer which struck the Essex batsman Stuart Law on the arm. When, in fading light, the game was called off with only six overs to go, two wickets to fall and six runs to get, there was, not surprisingly, edginess among the players."

But as the jostling began, the commentators fell back on the usual expressions of simulated anguish. "That was as ugly a scene as I would wish to witness," said Tony Lewis. "A disgraceful climax," reported the *Express*. "The shameful semi-final scenes at Chelmsford shocked millions of fans," complained the *Evening Standard*. Really? I bet most of those fans would have given their eye teeth to have been there themselves. It is just this kind of nerve-tangling contest that has won a whole new generation of fans over to what is now a mass-spectator sport. The high drama of the one-day game has, equally inevitably, attracted large sums of money, bringing further pressure to win at all costs. "My players' willingness to fight has been brilliant," was the comment of Matthew Maynard, the Glamorgan captain, and that was a far more honest comment on the game.

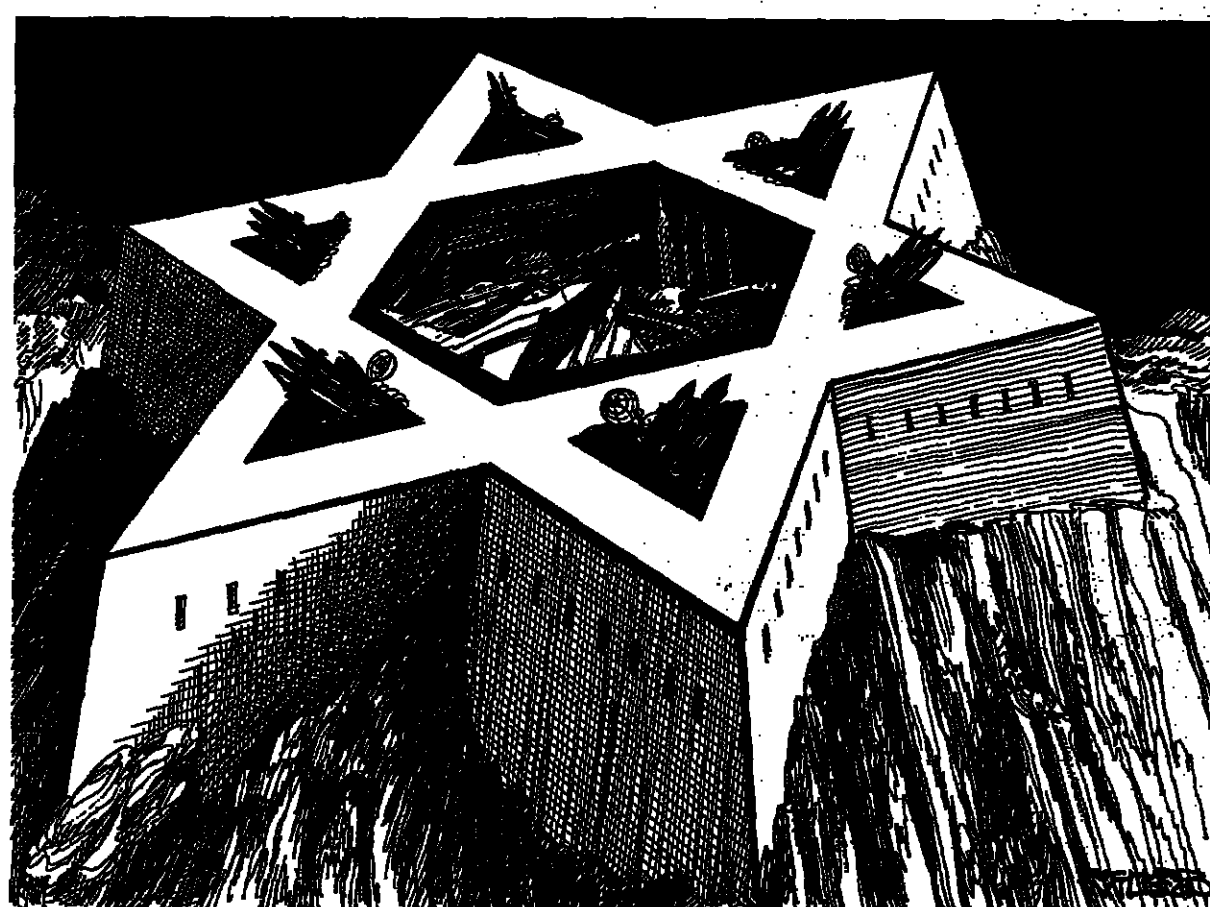
You cannot turn the clock back. Nor, I guess, can you sustain that level of competitive animosity on the field without the occasional outburst of crude and even violent behaviour. Of course it has to be controlled. I doubt if even the most avid of fans wants to see matters

deteriorate to the point where an outraged bowler takes a Mike Tyson-style bite out of the umpire's ear simply because he has turned down an lbw appeal. I would not like to encourage the awful baiting of players as they reach the crease, or the bad-mannered petulance of bowlers when their hysterical appeals are turned down. But there are ways of dealing with these things, rather as fake injuries or dissent have been handled on the football field. Perhaps, indeed, if the cricketing authorities could bring themselves to consider it, football has some useful lessons to impart. It would not, for instance, spell the end of civilisation as we know it if umpires were given the right to hand out yellow cards, or send a player off. The sooner we realise that cricket is no longer a nostalgic paradigm for a long-lost England the better. It is, in the end, just a game — a very exciting, absorbing and intense game which English players would very much like to win rather more often than they do.

And is this so-called deterioration all that new in any case? Didn't the greatest of English cricketers, W.G. Grace, once replace his left ball after it had been knocked off by the bowler, and then blame it on the wind? In terms of sportsmanship, that was infinitely worse than anything that took place at Chelmsford on Tuesday. Yet in those days England was considered a top nation.

The unpromising land of Zion

We still live with the legacy of fin-de-siècle Vienna: Hitler's anti-Semitism led to the Holocaust; Herzl's Zionism led to Israel. But can a Jewish nation state now offer Jews security?



William Rees-Mogg

covered the anti-Semitic Dreyfus case in Paris. His Austrian and French experience convinced him that Jews would never be safe except in their own country, where they could defend themselves. He believed that assimilation would not provide Jews with security against anti-Semitism, but that a Jewish nation state could.

Herzl himself was a thoroughly assimilated intellectual. In advocating a Jewish state he was opposing many of the assumptions of 19th-century liberal and non-religious Jews. As early as 1845, the conference of Reform rabbis at Frankfurt had deleted from the ritual all prayers for a return to Zion and a restoration of a Jewish state. The Philadelphia Reform Conference of 1869 followed the lead of the German rabbis and decreed that the messianic hope of Judaism is "the union of all the children of God in the confession of the unity of God".

Herzl put together a coalition of assimilated Jews who believed in Jewish nationalism with Orthodox Jews, many

of them living in great poverty in Eastern Europe and Russia, who believed in the tradition of the return to Zion. He was opposed by many liberal Jewish intellectuals of the period, and by most of the wealthiest Jews, though they gave generous charitable support to Jewish settlements in Palestine. It was the Holocaust which convinced the great majority that Herzl was right. He had said that assimilation could not protect European Jews from the anti-Semitism he had seen in Paris and Vienna, and a Viennese anti-Semitic student, Adolf Hitler, had grown up to murder some six million European Jews, assimilated and unassimilated alike.

The Holocaust and the independent

state of Israel belonged to the same decade of history, the 1940s. Without the Nazi persecution, which even in the 1930s was recruiting supporters for Zionism and emigrants to Palestine, it is doubtful whether Herzl's idea of a Jewish state could have been realised, even with the support of the Balfour Declaration of 1917. Hitler, who should never be underrated as a judge of geopolitical possibilities, thought that "the attempt to create a Jewish state will be a failure".

Israel is a remarkable society, in many ways an admirable one. Yet a century after the first Zionist Congress and nearly 50 years after Israel's Declaration of Independence, the permanent security of the state of Israel remains in question. We know that Herzl was right in his belief that assimilation could not protect the European Jews from anti-Semitism. The Holocaust vindicated his fears. What we do not know is whether the second part of Herzl's judgment was correct. If assimilation cannot protect Jews, does

it follow that the nation state can do so? This is what makes the peace process so important: Israel can provide security for its people only if it can win peace with its neighbours. The peace process is obviously not going well. Suicide bombings and mass riots have alienated Israelis; the Israeli blockade has alienated Palestinians. There is deep distrust on both sides.

The Israeli population is not itself the community that Herzl foresaw. European and American Jews, who are the children of the European Enlightenment, are now in a minority. The majority are either born in Israel, or of Russian or Middle Eastern descent. This has some advantages, in that their culture may be closer to that of the neighbouring Arab countries. It has the disadvantage that the assimilated Jews of the first post-1948 generation, such as Abba Eban or Foreign Minister, were among the original doves of peace.

After 50 years as an independent state, Israel is looking to the next 50 years. Israelis cannot predict what will happen to the politics of the Arab world, but most of them are pessimistic. They do not regard neighbouring Arab states as politically stable, yet a change of regime, particularly in Egypt or Saudi Arabia, would almost certainly damage Israel. They do not trust Yasser Arafat's Palestinian regime. That makes them reluctant to offer further concessions for a peace settlement which could be invalidated by some unpredictable change in the Arab power structure.

Israel is heavily dependent on the United States: American power protects Israel in the Middle East, just as it protects Taiwan in the far Pacific. Both Israel and Taiwan feel concerned about their protection. How long will the United States be able to project such global power? A British guarantee given in 1910 would have been much more impressive than one given in 1960. Will the balance of power in 50 years allow the United States to guarantee the security of a small country in the Eastern Mediterranean? Will the next nine American Presidents be as loyal to Israel as the past nine? Can Israel rely on the help of a European Union, when Europe, only 50 years ago, was the scene of the Holocaust?

Some of the Jews of Herzl's own kind, living an assimilated life in Britain or in the United States, have remained supporters with cash and speeches, but now have a terrible fear that Herzl was wrong, that the nation state itself is more of a danger than a security for the Jewish people. Certainly the culture of the Western and the Israeli Jewish communities seems to be moving further apart. Israel has the continuing support of a world Jewish community which no longer has any wish to live in Israel.

A rum tale

THERE is trouble among the coconut palms of the Caribbean island of St. Lucia. It involves Princess Margaret's great friend Lord Glenconner: an elephant called Bupa and a former British champion in the martial art of tai chi.

Lord Glenconner has lived in self-imposed exile in Caribbean for years, investing much of the substantial wealth he inherited as head of the Tennant family into making Mustique and then St. Lucia fashionable with royalty and rock stars. Recently, however, he has had more than his fair share of legal and financial problems on the islands and now runs a jerk chicken shack and rum shop.

Michael Jacques, a tai chi instructor, is claiming that Glenconner approached him about the possibility of leasing his property on St. Lucia and buying up some of his land. Glenconner used to keep an elephant called Bupa on the island. "He wanted a home for his elephant handler," says Jacques, "and to build a road to link his business on the Jalouise beach beneath my property. At first I thought it was great — Lord Glenconner renting my house!"

Now, however, Jacques is claiming that Glenconner has taken too much land, even though the papers, when were drawn up, did not stipulate just how much of the property the peer was allowed to have. Jacques wants the return of the land, which was left to him by his grandfather.

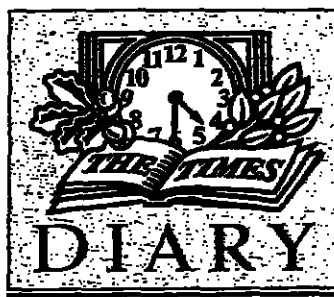
From St. Lucia, Glenconner says: "It is not my concern. It has

nothing to do with me." The suit is expected to come before St. Lucia's High Court this month.

Shivers ran through the Vatican the other day as a party of country clergy was paying a visit to St. Peter's, among them an 80-year-old parish priest who had spent most of his career as an exorcist. When the Pope came out to welcome the party, he recognised the old man and greeted him, saying with a smile: "Are there any devils in the Vatican?" "Yes," the priest replied gravely, "there are lots of them."

Chop phoeey

WRITING in this week's issue of *Country Life*, David Tang, the hyperactive Hong Kong businessman and friend of the Duchess of York,



has adopted a style somewhere between James Joyce and a particularly impenetrable Chinese restaurant menu. Doubtless while puffing on one of his omnipresent cigars, he has written a review of *The Last Governor*, Jonathan Dimbleby's new book on Chris Patten's tenure as Governor of Hong Kong. "A chopsey of Alan Clark and Anthony Trollope," Tang writes, "hotly stirred and quickly served up by a Boswell. But it doesn't taste all that good — some of the ingredients were found to be

off: Cradock, Howe, Heseltine and many other mandarins from the Foreign Office. Small wonder that they are now complaining that the really nasty taste to the dish comes from the main ingredient: Patten himself, made all the more indigestible by cook Dimbleby. But it is far too early to tell whose bitterness is justified. History takes a bit longer to swallow and taste." Like the reviewer's writing.

Premiership

LAST night saw a five-a-side football match in Tuscany between a team from Tony Blair's house-party and one from the local village. The England side in this prelude to the World Cup game against Italy which takes place later this year, included the Prime Minister, his two footballing sons, Euan and Nicholas, who have attended official receptions on this holiday clashing their footballs, and a couple of their bodyguards.

The match was played in the early evening, but a grizzly reversion to Downing Street said it would not be revealing the score.

Odourless

AUGUST brings news from Kew Gardens and the remarkable dian-



arm plant which last year, as this *Diary* reported, produced no leaves, but rather flowers and a smell combining rotten flesh and burnt sugar. The so-called corpse plant, which looks like a giant exploding leek, drew an extra 20,000 visitors and the world's press to Kew in 1996. This year, it has another surprise.

The 11kg tuber has sprouted incredible towering leaves, but no flowers. "Sir David Attenborough is fascinated by the thing," says a spokesman at the gardens. He visits the gardens regularly to check on its progress. "It is such an unusual plant — rare even in its native Sumatra. So rare in fact that even Sumatrans have been coming here to look at it."

Paris heroes

A MOVING new ceremony will be incorporated into this year's commemoration of the Allied liberation of Paris, which took place on August 25, 1944. Eighty French actors and actresses will take up their positions outside the Museum of the Rights of Man from midnight until midnight, from where they will read out the names of all those non-Frenchmen who died in defence of France, but not as members of the conscript armies. Foreign Resistance fighters will make up the

bulk of them. No mention will be made, however, of their particular nationalities or wartime activities. The reading is the brainwave of a new organisation called "L'Association du Mémorial Vivant", which has the backing of the British theatre director, Peter Brook and the actress Jane Birkin, both of whom live in France.

The association plans to continue this activity next year on May 8 (the day of celebration of the Allied victory), and on the same site in Paris, and is keen to hear of any names who may not have made the first list.

P.H.S.

Jane Birkin: paying tribute

When were...



Lord Glenconner: "Who, me?"

When were...

When were...

When were...



JINNAH'S LEGACY

A great nation with too little to celebrate

Pakistan today marks its fiftieth birthday. From market, mosque and municipal hall speeches, ceremonies and official jubilation will recall the tense but heady moment in 1947 when the improbable vision of Mohammed Ali Jinnah became a reality. A new state, conceived as a bastion of Islam in the sub-continent, was born. But 50 years after the bloodshed and carnage, the awful accompaniment to the wrenching division of British India, even Pakistanis are wondering what there is to celebrate.

In a sombre message to be broadcast today, President Leghari recalls that democracy was the spirit of August 14, 1947, when Pakistan came into being, a day ahead of independent India. But he notes that even while celebrating the nation's freedom, the triumphant Dr Jinnah predicted "the grimmer battle for preservation of that freedom and building it on a firmer and sounder basis". That battle is still being fought. Indeed, as Mr Leghari admits with humbling honesty, despite half a century of economic growth, the fate of the common citizen has not changed much. Unemployment, illiteracy, malnutrition and pollution are common; a gulf still yawns between rich and poor. The President exhorts his country to pause and ponder the question: "What has gone wrong down the road?"

He himself gives some of the answers. He speaks of a population explosion that is eating up every industrial and agricultural gain; of the need for well-defined social policies and "efficient and effective" laws and strong institutions; of the unresolved Kashmir dispute that has bedevilled relations between Pakistan and India and the heavy toll of the Afghan war. He confronts the nadir to which the nation's morale has now sunk. With its Churchillian echoes of tears and sacrifice, his speech is both a bleak assessment of a nation that has lost its way and a challenge to country and Government to make a fresh start.

The statistics reinforce the sense of gloom. Pakistan is a country where soldiers out-

number doctors nine to one. A quarter of its 130 million people live in poverty. Only 36 per cent of the population can read or write, and among the women of Balochistan literacy is 2 per cent. An international monitoring group includes Pakistan among the world's most corrupt countries. Most of its land and wealth is controlled by a mere 400 families. Defence spending and interest on the £18 billion foreign debt consume over half the national budget. And a recent survey found that almost half the nation would prefer a return to military rule, the form of government for 24 of Pakistan's 50 years.

All this falls sadly short of the principles Dr Jinnah pursued with such single-minded obstinacy. But many of Pakistan's current difficulties lie in that very pursuit. For the country's *raison d'être* was a theological rather than cultural, linguistic or geographical concept. Divided into two wings a thousand miles apart, the central Government spent the first 24 years trying to juggle the interests and budget of East and West with predictably disastrous results. And when Bangladesh broke away after a fratricidal war, the dislocation to the body politic led to the hanging of Pakistan's subsequent Prime Minister and a new period of military rule.

Yet in contemplating their unfulfilled promise, Pakistanis can take some comfort. They inherited a functioning civil service, a sound legal system and a well-trained army which is an asset so long as it stays out of politics. They have shown a resilient attachment to democracy despite the blows against it. They have proved, in their diaspora and in industry and research, able entrepreneurs. They have a deep moral attachment to family, religion and community. And, despite the setbacks, they have built up a sense of nationhood that shows itself most exuberantly on the cricket pitch. Britain was a midwife to the country's difficult birth. It has a profound interest in Pakistan's success in moving into the next century with the prosperity and security that have eluded it for too long.

OUT OF THE TRAP

The day of reckoning has been eased for some students

This morning will not be a comfortable one in many households. At few points in life does so much depend upon what is revealed in so few seconds. As they awaited the A-level results, parents as well as students have spent the past two months with the shadow of the examiner at their shoulder. For some the anguish will be over and their plans can now be implemented. Others will be left in a state of considerable uncertainty. The clearing process may prove at least as testing as the weeks that have preceded it. The Times will do what it can to soothe that stress with a service which begins today with our 16-page supplement, providing a comprehensive compendium of courses.

Each year the competition for available places seems to intensify. This reflects the rising numbers who pass A levels. There is a legitimate debate about whether this examination now stretches students enough, but that should not detract from the individual achievements that will be rightly celebrated. Students can only deal with the exams they have been set. Many thousands of families who until now have never seen a son or daughter enter higher education will shortly have that experience.

This year an additional element has complicated calculations. As *The Times* was the first to note, the decisions taken by the Government in the light of the Dearing report created an injustice for gap-year students. Having applied, been offered, and accepted conditional places under one type of funding rules, they suddenly found that these had been altered. As that penny, or rather tens of thousands of pennies, dropped, the students concerned seemed likely to abandon plans for a free year before university and swamp the clearing system.

WHEN WERE YOU BORN?

Mystics clearly have a great future

Astrology is the second oldest profession — almost as lucrative as the first and much more respectable. Diana, Princess of Wales, is only the latest public figure to find herself gazing into the heavens for a glimpse of the future. In the Bard's Ancient Rome, Cassius consoled Brutus with the thought that their fault lay not in themselves but in their stars. Modern India was born at midnight 50 years ago on the advice of a guru. Ronald Reagan chose the same witching hour for his inauguration as Governor of California on the advice of his wife Nancy's psychic sidekick. It is easy to mock but those gifted with the second sight such as Rita Rogers, the Finsley Romany, perform a valuable service. They know the great truth at the heart of all horoscopes, the eternal mystery of the timing which governs emergence from the womb — there is one born every minute.

There is another truth to which the best psychics are privy. Given the overlap between their address books and Nigel Dempster's they are all too conscious that the wicked fairy often sprinkles gullible dust as liberally in the well-appointed private room as the overcrowded public ward. The Duchess of York's robust scepticism towards the constricting nonsense of the Court did not prevent her squeezing herself into the glass pyramid of Madame Vasso, of course,

not the only venerable Egyptian treasures which have captivated a Princess.

It is in affairs of the heart that the psychic comes into her own. Whether it is by the turn of the tarot or through a glass darkly, the mystic can scry the features of the favoured son. Curiously, the man most will marry is never short, pallid and ugly and always possessed of a nice personality. It may be the distorting curve of the crystal, or the gloom of the consulting room with only a guttering Boots candle for illumination, but the intended always looks more coffee than tea. The man in the ball inevitably has the swarthy appeal of an Annabel's Omar Sharif or Brompton Road Sultan. So, a girl might think, if the stars dictate surrender to the East then why not accept fate's decree? A kiss on the Med is just Kismet.

Psychics, like meaningless gobbledygook, may speak in meaningless gobbledygook, charge outrageous hourly rates and still tell their customers exactly what they want to hear but both, like the bacteria in the lower gut, are useful parasites. They redistribute money from the undeserving and idle rich more effectively than any sumptuary tax yet levied. Both callings also provide employment for those souls insufficiently rigorous for the professions, but not creative enough for the arts. There is, clearly, still a great future in clairvoyance.

Teenagers and the risk of pregnancy

From Miss Barbara Hewson

Sir, I see that the Government plans to target schoolgirls "at risk" of pregnancy, with a view to educating them about the perils of premature parenthood (report, later editions, August 11). What is it planning to teach them: "Just say No"?

Surely a Labour Government should also tackle the behaviour of the men responsible for impregnating these young girls? Birth control is not an exclusively female issue, and teenage pregnancy should not be seen as a girl's problem.

Britain comes second only to the US, which has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in the industrialised world. Both countries' records are deplorable.

In the US, research carried out by the Alan Guttmacher Institute (1996) found that two thirds of teenage mothers were impregnated by adult males and that "almost half of 15-19 year-olds think that the average young person... does not have enough accurate information about sex and reproduction". Judging by the teenage pregnancy rate here, British teenagers are similarly lacking in information.

On July 31 the *Camden New Journal* reported that children as young as 11, 12 and 13 were seeking help in terminating unwanted pregnancies. That is appalling. It also suggests that our society fails to protect young girls from predatory sexual behaviour by some males, who do not care about preventing pregnancy, let alone protecting adolescents from premature sexual activity.

Labour will not solve the problem of teenage pregnancy unless it is prepared to instil socially responsible sexual attitudes and behaviour into men and boys as well.

Yours faithfully,
BARBARA HEWSON,
12 Gray's Inn Square,
Gray's Inn, WCI,
August 11.

From Councillor Dr Paul Walker

Sir, The Government's proposal of targeting under-achieving girls in secondary schools, with the aim of reducing the number of teenage pregnancies, and thus the cost to the public purse, represents a totally inadequate "sticking plaster" approach to a very serious problem.

Such an approach merely addresses what we epidemiologists term the proximal or immediate causes of the problem, namely the lack of knowledge about contraceptive methods and the failure to fully comprehend the magnitude of the responsibilities of parenthood. The underlying causes, namely the lack of self confidence, empowerment and career prospects, are not dealt with.

The Government's idea of targeting these girls is spot on: but what needs to be delivered is high-quality remedial general education by the very best teachers; not just sex education and warnings of the perils of premature parenthood. In this way they would stand some chance of developing the self-respect and hope which are the really effective contraceptives.

Sex education is, of course, important — for boys as well as girls; and it should start at an early age. But providing a good education to the less advantaged through affirmative action and preferential funding if need be is more important.

Yours sincerely,
PAUL WALKER,
8 Church Avenue,
Sneyd Park, Bristol,
August 13.

Call for commas

From Mrs D. Vaughan Meyrick

Sir, Thank you for publishing Derwent May's article on punctuation, "That's a hyphen, dash it" (August 8). As we now have a Government claiming to be concerned about education, the subject badly needs an airing.

Ignorance of grammar and punctuation today is the result of poor-quality education yesterday. Today's teachers cannot be justly blamed because so many of them were not taught such disciplines at school. The educational ideology of their school-days held that, left to themselves, children would find out what they thought they needed to know. This theory saved their teachers a lot of hard work and allowed pupils to express themselves by writing unreadable rubbish, without correction.

The pupils are now the teachers. Mr Blunkett expects them to teach grammar and punctuation. How?

Yours faithfully,
D. VAUGHAN MEYRICK
(Secondary schoolteacher, 1936-70),
2 Penrice House, The Crescent,
Cardiff Road, Llandaff, Cardiff,
August 8.

From Mr Andrew Tringham

Sir, Derwent May castigates those who omit commas before nouns, as in "2000". There may be a sound reason for this. In most of the Continent the comma in a number is not used to separate thousands, but decimals, so its inclusion is not always helpful; indeed, it could be misleading.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW TRINGHAM,
70 Havelock Road, Croydon, Surrey,
andrewtringham.demon.co.uk
August 8.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Tory lauds Dalyell's independence

From Sir Ian Lloyd

Sir, Magnus Linklater ("Parliamentarian at bay", August 12) has deployed a number of powerful arguments in support of the view that any attempt to deselect Tam Dalyell would reflect gravely on the reputation of his constituency party, the Labour Party in Parliament and, indeed, the House of Commons. As a former political opponent of Dalyell, I would like to deploy one further argument in his support.

The present House of Commons, like most of its predecessors, does not lack its ration of placemen, office-seekers and sycophants. Nor are future Parliaments likely to enjoy a healthy surfeit of independent-minded Members (of any political party or none).

The combination of knowledge, judgment, independence and political courage exercised in the public interest — which seldom coincides totally with the contemporary definition of that interest by the party in power — is comparatively rare in those seeking to enter the House. It will become more so if the exercise of these qualities by those who have managed to surmount the obstacles, both to entrance to Parliament and survival in it, are attacked by groups in their local party organisations who cannot claim in any sense to be representative.

None of those who served with Tam

Dalyell, however much we may have disagreed from time to time with his arguments, could possibly deny that he fitted precisely Burke's definition of the Member who owed his constituents, above all else, his independent judgment. But he has also made a further contribution to Parliament which is quite exceptional and of increasing importance.

All too few Members have shown any interest in the growing scope, significance and effects of science, to which the political establishments of all three parties tend to pay little more than lip service. Tam Dalyell's contribution to science policy and the public understanding of its significance in Parliament has invariably been knowledgeable, constructive and sustained. Few, if any, can match it.

Although my own political loyalties lie elsewhere, I would argue, on this record alone, quite apart from his immense vision on the Midlothian question, that if his constituency activists were to deselect him they would be doing a great disservice not only to Parliament but to science.

Yours faithfully,
IAN LLOYD
(Conservative MP, 1964-92),
Bakers House, Priors Dean,
Nr Petersfield, Hampshire.
ian@shelmalier.demon.co.uk
August 12.

Unravelling the housing chain

From Mr Lionel Bloch

Sir, The Adam Smith Institute's reported proposals for the simplification of house-buying (details, August 11) are unrealistic.

The delay and uncertainty involved in so many conveyancing transactions are caused primarily by the unwillingness of buyers to commit themselves until and unless they have found a purchaser for their own property. The infamous chain transactions are merely the inevitable consequence of the fact that a buyer needs the proceeds of sale of his existing home to pay for the acquisition of the new one.

The claim that there would be no dashed hopes or expectations is pernicious nonsense unless a purchaser is willing to enter into a commitment which he may be unable to honour without incurring the costs of a bridging loan for an indefinite period.

If solicitors advise against this risk they merely do their job. It is those who propose quixotic solutions who — to use the elegant expression of the institute — should be "taken by the scruff of the neck".

Yours faithfully,
LIONEL BLOCH (solicitor),
Halcyon, Ormond Avenue,
Richmond, Surrey,
August 11.

From Mr Paul Greenwood

Sir, The problem of gazumping [letters, August 4 and 9] would be reduced if vendors — with the assistance of their agents and solicitors — put their house in order before marketing it.

This is simple and entails obtaining the deeds from the building society, asking their solicitors to draw up a draft contract and a local search, and having a surveyor carry out a structural survey or house-buyer's report, as appropriate. The cost of the latter can be added to the purchase price, thus making the surveyor beholden to the purchaser.

A complete package for the purchaser's solicitors, coupled with an exclusivity agreement whereby the

vendor and purchaser undertake not to sell/buy for a short agreed period, will greatly reduce the delay between an offer being accepted and exchange of contracts (so long as no "chain" is involved). It will thus eliminate the chances of gazumping.

Purchasers can help their case by getting a mortgage offer subject to the property before they make an offer.

Yours faithfully,
PAUL GREENWOOD
(Managing Director),
Stacks (property consultants),
Kemble Farm, Minety,
Malmesbury, Wiltshire,
August 4.

From the Chief Executive of the Society of Licensed Conveyancers

Sir, Mr J. P. O'Brien (letter, August 4) is critical of the proposal aimed at reducing gazumping which would involve home-buyers and sellers providing a preliminary deposit upon reaching initial agreement to proceed, and which would then be forfeitable by the innocent party if the other was to withdraw without acceptable reason. He suggests that a simpler solution would be insurance, which would recompense the innocent party for lost legal and survey fees.

However, the main purpose of suggesting that an initial deposit be paid, subject to the terms of a simple standard preliminary agreement, would be to induce the parties, once they have agreed to proceed, to honour that agreement.

The thought of losing a preliminary deposit of 0.5 per cent or 1 per cent of the agreed price may not prevent a seller from accepting a considerably higher offer; but the certainty of losing hard cash today, as opposed to the promise of a higher price tomorrow, would undoubtedly act as a powerful constraint.

Yours faithfully,
NIGEL EWERT EVANS,
Chief Executive,
The Society of Licensed Conveyancers,
Chancery House,
35 Church Road, Croydon, Surrey,
August 8.

Mad prawns

From Colonel J. I. G. Capadose (ret'd)

Sir, Mr Peter Hungerford-Welch is alarmed by reading of "de-ranked" lawnmowers in Tonbridge (letter, August 12; also letter, August 13).

Let him not come up the road to Sevenoaks, where "mad tiger prawns" are sold over a supermarket fish counter. This exotic, if disconcerting, title appears on the little label speckled out by the weighing and pricing device, which cannot manage "Madagascar".

Perhaps his fears of Kentish vendors would be allayed, on the other hand, by buying a portion of the more prosaic and comforting "trad undyed hadd".

Yours faithfully,
JAMES CAPADOSE,
Breaches,
Vicarage Hill, Westerham, Kent,
August 12.

A trouble halved

From Mr J. E. Humphrey

Sir, Is it not refreshing to note that your report (August 4) of the possible threat to these shores from the malaria mosquito, *Anopheles gambiae*, and of the "mongrelisation" of the racial purity of the native honey bee, omits the now customary assurance of government spokesmen that troubles are but inheritances from their predecessors in office?

Yours faithfully,
J. E. HUMPHREY,
9 Offington Gardens,
Worthing, West Sussex,
August 4.

Lord Simon has nothing to declare

From Lord Simon of Highbury, Minister for Trade and Competitiveness in Europe

Sir, With reference to the leader in your newspaper today entitled "Above suspicion", and your front-page report yesterday "Lords to face Nolan review of standards", you may, for the avoidance of what would appear to be continuing doubt, find helpful a clear statement of my own position in relation to the declaration of my interests in the Lords' register.

Firstly, your leader implies an oversight in the declaration of my directorships. In fact, I resigned all my directorships on appointment to ministerial office. I therefore had no directorships to declare.

Secondly, I have no consultancies nor do I intend to have for the duration of my ministerial appointment. Again, there was nothing to declare.

Thirdly, with regard to my shareholdings, you will know that the requirement to declare shareholdings in the Lords' register is discretionary. My former BP shareholdings were already a matter of public record detailed in the BP annual accounts. My shareholdings in BP have now been sold. My non-BP shareholdings were being dealt with via a blind trust, in accordance with the then *Questions of Procedure for Ministers*.

I must stress that the arrangements put in place since my appointment as Minister for Trade and Competitiveness in Europe to avoid conflicts of interest in respect of my personal finances and private interests have reflected the advice of my Permanent Secretary and have at all times been fully in accordance with the requirements of *Questions of Procedure for Ministers*.

I hope that this sets the record straight.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID SIMON,
Department of Trade and Industry,
1 Victoria Street, SW1,
August 13.

Class and the Army

From Mr J. K. Morland

Sir, Out of the list which you publish today of 243 Army officers newly commissioned from the RMA Sandhurst no more than 100 come from public schools (I include all borderline cases). All the others come from state or grammar schools.

So much for the controversy in your correspondence columns (August 7 and 11) on the subject of snobbery in the Armed Forces.

Yours faithfully,
J. K. MORLAND,
New House,
Capel Lye, Moorhurst Lane,
South Holmwood, Dorking, Surrey,
August 12.

From Mr Peter Scott

Sir, Major Eric Joyce (reports, August 4 and 8) would appear to have had the last laugh over his superiors. Your account today of last week's Sovereign's Parade at RMA Sandhurst shows that of the 45 officers commissioned into the Brigade of Guards and the Cavalry 44 were educated at the major public schools (12 of them at Eton or Harrow), whilst of the 62 entering infantry regiments 48 were schooled in the independent sector.

This is however entirely academic. Anyone who has served in the Army will know that, regardless of the officers' educational background, it is the warrant officers and sergeants who run the show.

Yours sergeant-majority,
PETER SCOTT,
The Broom, West Woodburn,
Hexham, Northumberland.
bit-uk@msn.com
August 12.

The music of Strouse

From Mr Barry Fantoni

Sir, In his review of *A Lot of Living* (arts, August 8) James Christopher tells us that the songs are from "a swath of obscure Broadway musicals". They are not.

Bye Bye Birdie was a massive hit and was made into a film. *Dance A Little Closer* was a massive flop and made front-page news for being one of the few Broadway shows in recent times to run only one night.

Mr Christopher also failed to say that all the music, as well as the odd lyric, was written by Charles Strouse, whose most acclaimed success is *Annie*. The show is actually billed as "Charles Strouse's *A Lot of Living*".

Yours faithfully,
BARRY FANTONI,
3 Francina Road, SW4,
August 8.

Figuring it out

From Mrs B. M. Speelman

Sir, I am curious to know whether the falling unemployment figures, which Labour in Opposition repeatedly claimed were manipulated and spurious, are now genuine.

Yours faithfully,
MIRIAM SPEELMAN,
2 Chobley Gardens,
M11 Lane, Hampstead, NW6,
August 13.

